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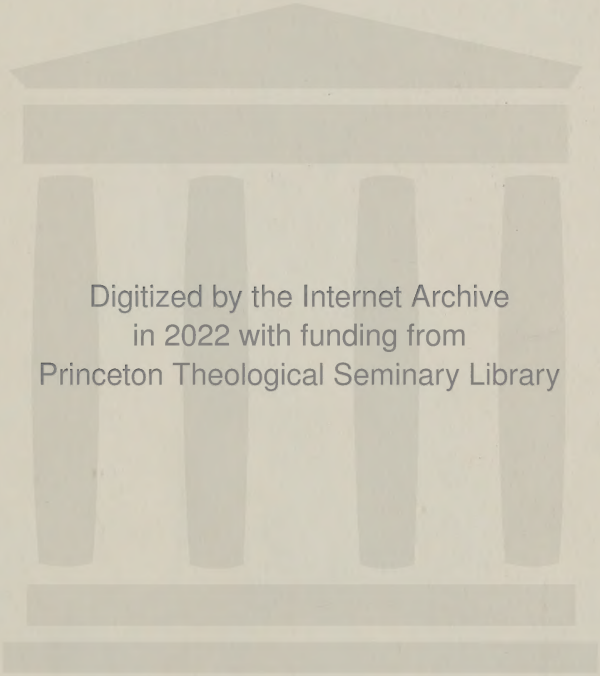
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A CHRISTIAN IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

By RALPH A. FELTON

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RURAL LIFE SERIES

THE BIBLE AND RURAL LIFE
(IN PREPARATION)

THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND ITS PROGRAM
ROADMAN

A CHRISTIAN IN THE COUNTRYSIDE
FELTON

THE CHRISTIAN AND RURAL INSTITUTIONS
(IN PREPARATION)

RURAL LIFE SERIES

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A CHRISTIAN IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

By
RALPH A. FELTON

Approved by the Committee on Curriculum
of the Board of Sunday Schools of the
Methodist Episcopal Church

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THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN
NEW YORK CINCINNATI

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Printed in the United States of America

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INTRODUCTION

A Christian in the Countryside is one of a series of brief, elective study courses for adult classes in rural Sunday schools. Titles in this series—The Rural Life Series—are listed on a preceding page. The suggestion is made that the textbooks shall be studied by classes in the order of titles in this list.

The theory that has given rise to this series of elective study courses is that the country church, as one of the most important of the religious and social institutions of our nation, has problems that are peculiar to itself. If it is to survive permanently and fulfill its mission these problems must be studied, and solutions sought and found, by the men and women who constitute the church. It is not enough for the pastor to be aware of these problems, study them and preach about them. The men and women who in themselves *are* the church must be thoroughly cognizant of them. It is not sufficient for the congregation to hear of them by the hearing of the ear. They must do more than hear. They must hear about them, read about them, think about them, discuss them, and accomplish their solution. The agency for this undertaking is ready at hand in the adult class.

The use of such a series of study courses involves for most adult classes a marked change of procedure. These courses are intended for use at the Sunday-school hour, for the time being taking the place of the Uniform Lessons. An objection may be anticipated from some on the ground that these special courses are not Bible study courses. A thorough, impartial examination of the material will effectively answer this objection, for these courses are in a very real and vital sense Bible study. They involve the application of Christian ideals and principles, derived from the Scriptures, to present-day problems of living in rural communities. They bring the Bible out of the past into the present and seek to make its teachings live in to-day's life.

They seek to reproduce in the men and women of our rural communities the type of religious experience which resulted in the early Christian Church giving to the world personalities of power—men and women who revealed by their everyday lives that they had been with Jesus and learned of him—together with those new social ideals which remade civilization. These courses are not intended to displace the Bible from the adult class. They are intended to bring about a new and more effective kind of Bible study.

It is hoped also that these courses will find other and wider uses. Wherever groups of men and women gather for the consideration of problems involved in the betterment of life in village and countryside they will, we believe, be found serviceable.

THE EDITORS.

CHAPTER I

WEEK-DAY RELIGION

Who Is My Neighbor?

A group of neighbors were comfortably seated in a community hall one afternoon to listen to a speaker discuss "Community Welfare." As this out-of-town guest was being introduced, and everyone present was trying to look pleased, a small boy rushed through the door and announced that a neighbor's house a half mile up the hill was on fire. Leaving the speaker standing in the middle of the floor making his introductory remarks, the entire audience rushed up the hill in buggies and autos and on foot to put out the fire. After it was out, and the speech made, the writer, who happened to be the speaker that day, had a chance to think about this question of neighborliness. That group of people were neighbors of the man whose house was on fire, not simply because they lived near him, nor because they had built a neighborhood house in which to hold such community meetings, but because they helped him save his home. When a man's house is on fire, a pail of water is worth more than a lecture on neighborliness or more than resolutions of sympathy.

A part of Jesus' great task was to convince the religious leaders of his day that the law of love transcends mere morality and orthodoxy, that service is nearer the heart of the Father than formal worship and that everyday religion is the great need of the world.

Scripture Lesson

Luke 10. 25-37.

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? 27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neigh-

bor as thyself. 28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? 30 Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, 34 and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on *them* oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. 36 Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? 37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

The Busy Jericho Road

The priest and the Levite had doubtless attended faithfully all the services in the Jerusalem Temple on the preceding Sabbath. They may have been carrying a missionary message of good will to the villagers of Jericho. The road was hot and dusty, lonesome and dangerous. As religious leaders they may have thought they were too valuable to society to take any chances. With the law in one hand and the prophets in the other they hurried on, passing a man in need. Through this parable Jesus points out a cardinal principle of his gospel—*Give loving service gladly to those in need near at hand.* Christian living is not at the other end of the Jericho road; it is in front of us, around us, in all our daily work. Putting the spirit of Christ into all our social contacts, Christianizing our week-day activities, is carrying out the command of our Lord when he said, "Go, and do thou likewise."

Christian Ideals In Rural Life

Nowhere do we see the practices of the good Samaritan better illustrated than among neighbors in a rural community. A New York farmer was taken sick and had to

stay in bed, neglecting his work. There was no resident minister there to organize any helpful activities. One day ten men with teams and two with tractors drove on the sick man's farm and plowed his fields. All day long as these neighbors went round and round those furrows they were following in the footsteps of the man in the parable who lost a day on his homeward journey to Samaria. This "Jericho Road religion" is quite common in this New York community. On one of the farms pure-bred sheep, cattle, and poultry are raised and exhibited at county fairs. A twelve-year-old daughter in this home went along with her parents to these fairs with her six Shetland ponies and won prizes amounting to three hundred dollars. When told she could do as she pleased with her money she decided to give it all to a nearby home for crippled children. This twelve-year-old farm girl who gave all her summer's earnings in this way was carrying on the mission of Jesus announced in his home synagogue to his neighbors in Nazareth and practiced as he "went about in all . . . Galilee."

Preventing sickness is even more Christian than nursing the sick. A pastor who puts on a health campaign is laboring in the spirit of his Lord, who said he "came that they may have life," just as much as or more than when he is "making sick calls." And still there are some good Christian workers who do not see that everyday religion includes the prevention of disease. One woman was faithfully drilling her Sunday-school class for a Christmas program. Some of her children became exposed to the measles. Not wanting to "spoil the Christmas services," she kept up her practice until she had spread the disease throughout the community. Reciting the story of Jesus' birth meant more to this woman than putting into practice the spirit of his life. Not "back to Christ," let us say, but "forward with Christ"—to new ways of realizing his ideals in everyday living.

Religion In Our Homes

We preach and profess our religion at church and practice it at home. We may spend five hours a week in church

but we spend a hundred at home. I may get up late Sunday morning, lose my temper while milking the cows, scold the children at the breakfast table, spend more time complaining about being late to church than in helping get the children ready, then finally rush into my pew and bow my head to meet my Lord, only to find I parted from him at home.

The most interesting challenge to our religious life to-day is to make it an everyday affair. Is our religion strong enough to stay with us while we're breaking a colt? When the children are cross, when the water bucket gets empty, when the cake falls, or the clothesline breaks, we need a very practical religion. Blessed is the farmer who, when plowing his field, understands that he is cooperating with God to feed the world. When sowing his seed he recognizes that it is God's law that he is obeying and later he sees God's hand in the miracle of harvest. When he sits down to his table with his family, his grace is not a perfunctory recital of a few sentences he learned when he was a child, but a new, heartfelt expression of his daily thanks to the Giver of every good gift. Happy is that mother who finds an opportunity in the children's hundred daily questions to teach them the principles of Christian living. God bless our home not because we hang that motto on our walls, but because our family relationships are Christian.

A house is built of wood and stone, of posts and sills and piers
But a home is built of loving deeds that last a thousand years.

Religion in Our Daily Life

A great agricultural leader recently left his position in his State College of Agriculture to live in his old home and manage his farm. While at the college he attended a city church. When he went back to his country church again he said he was surprised to find how little relation there was between the religion discussed in that church and the daily life of the farm people. If this situation is generally true, it is a great challenge to all Christian farm people. We must Christianize our relations with our hired hands and our tenants and make them human rela-

tionships as well as economic. Our neighbor from whom we borrow and to whom we lend should see a spirit of service instead of selfishness in our transactions.

One day after giving a talk on "Better Homes" a county home-demonstration agent was driving past the home of a newly arrived immigrant farmer. As she passed his house, one of his hens ran in front of her car and was killed. It was not her fault, and although she was hurrying to town to catch a train she stopped and explained to the new Polish family that she would be glad to reimburse them for their loss. She was putting into practice what she had been talking about in her address.

A group of eighty farmers and their wives met in their church for an institute. They offered a prayer of thankfulness when they began their meal together. When they had finished, the nutrition leader of their home bureau talked to them about food values and why this particular meal had been planned. Then the group discussed ways of improving their school and beautifying their church. Community improvement in this case was prompted by a religious motive. For an hour the men and women played together games that teach teamwork and cooperation. Then they discussed a cooperative undertaking relative to the marketing of their farm produce. Religion with this church is a week-day affair. It is the spirit and the idealism that control their daily living. Religion and education are emphasized so much in this parish that when the young people are graduated from high school and college they come back to these farms to establish their homes and to rear their children. This is rural America at its best, because here the community life is dominated by Christian ideals.

Let us look at an adjacent community, where idealism is lacking. In some ways this second community may be more progressive. The houses and barns look prosperous. The farmers are thoroughly familiar with improved methods of seeding, fertilizing, pruning, testing, and other modern agricultural practices. Recently they put on what they called a "pure-bred sire campaign." As a result thirty-two out of thirty-four bulls in the neighborhood are pure-breds. You say, "This is truly a progressive

township." But because they were lacking in Christian ideals they soon became embroiled in a neighborhood lawsuit over one of these animals.

Our greatest danger in rural America to-day is that our progress in religious living may not keep up with our advances in economic life. A great leader in one of our farm cooperative movements recently said in an address regarding cooperation, "This is a question of dollars and cents; it is not a question of brotherly love." His leadership in the cooperative movement is much like that of a captain who starts a ship out to sea without a compass. This magnetic needle may seem quiet, small, and insignificant compared with the buzzing engines, huge steel girders, and belching smokestacks; yet it is this little needle, pointing faithfully in its one direction, that keeps the huge steamer off the rocks. Likewise, Christian idealism must point the way through all our stormy seas of economic agricultural progress.

What Is Christian Idealism?

A proper mixture of self-denial and service gives us our Christian ideals. These rare qualities are achieved only through vital intimacy with the life and teachings of our Lord. Either of these qualities without the other is a disappointment.

Along the very road from Jerusalem to Jericho where the good Samaritan personified Jesus' gospel are situated to-day many secluded monasteries. To these cloistered halls come somber monks captivated by the spirit of sacrifice and self-denial. They repeat prayers, chant hymns, and meditate upon the higher life, while the Jericho road in front of them remains infested with robbers. Apostolic self-denial must be united with twentieth-century service. Likewise, we have many splendid service organizations in our country communities to-day which are holding meetings only to quarrel and finally die. They clearly need an infusion of humility and self-denial.

A group of rural women was organized into a home-improvement club; but soon after they elected their officers and started their program, six of them "pulled off and

organized a club of their own." They had one of these big ideals without the other.

Two families started a Sunday school and organized a church in a commendable effort to provide religious services for an unchurched neighborhood. Fifty people attended the meetings, and religion began to grow in the life of this community. Before the year had passed, these same two families "fell out" with their neighbors over the question of denominational allegiance. The sign they painted and nailed on the schoolhouse, bearing the words "The Methodist Episcopal Church," is still there to be read by every passer-by; but no one comes to the services. Self-denial must be wedded to the spirit of service to reproduce Christ's teachings in our community life.

At a recent meeting in a church where many sermons have been preached, and prayers offered during the last seventy-five years, a hundred farm people were gathered to discuss their community problems. One man spoke on the excessive costs of spraying material for his orchard. Another had spent fifty dollars for feed and sold sixty-nine dollars' worth of milk during the past month, thus receiving only nineteen dollars for his labor. A mother spoke of the attractions and dangers to their young people who had to go out of the community for all of their social life. There were so many local economic and social problems it seemed best to organize a community club; but from among all these veteran church members none could be found who was willing to give any time to becoming an officer in such an organization. Neither the spirit of self-denial nor the spirit of service had permeated that orthodox congregation.

Here is another community in need of this week-day religion. A lecture room was built in a Presbyterian church in a prosperous agricultural community. As a result of addresses by the outside speakers who were brought here to lecture, the boys in the neighborhood petitioned the church officials for the use of the hall for games. They were told by the officials to "go build a hall of their own."

"They might knock the plaster off the church," said one of the leading members.

"After the boys used the room, we would not want to sit down on the chairs with our good clothes on," protested one woman. The boys then wrote out a petition and sent it to the grange, asking for the use of their hall. These same church members belonged to the grange also. The debate over the petition was sharp. The result was that the grange agreed to let the boys have the hall but to charge them ten dollars a night. Of course, the boys could not pay this much, and the matter was dropped.

These same grange officials are alarmed over the fact that "the young people are not joining the grange as they should."

When one of the church officials was asked about these boys he said, "Oh, they've all scattered now." Like the Levite and the priest this church had the wrong kind of religion.

A woman living on a hillside farm in southern New York State raised her own family; then, when her brother's wife died, raised his children and later adopted two boys from the State reformatory. Her only explanation of why she wanted to adopt these two was "they needed a good home." The neighbors say they have it now. Any parent will agree that this reticent Christian woman has both the spirit of sacrifice and of service.

A Living Religion

We live our religion each day in the week if Christ's spirit dwells within us. We live it when we get up in the morning by spreading cheer and good will in the name of our Master. We live it at the breakfast table by kindness and courtesy. We live it at the store or in a trade by sincerity and honesty. We live it at the grange and farm bureau by a willingness to help. At the school election we will put childhood above taxes in the name of Him who blessed the children. At our community meetings we will have the spirit of service in the name of Him who went about doing good. Our farm will be a republic of kindness, our home a Christian democracy, our community the beginning of the kingdom of heaven, because Christ dwells with his disciples in our midst.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do we have in our churches to-day people who are playing the part of the priest, the Levite, and the good Samaritan?

2. What is the difference between a Christian home and one where Christ's principles of self-denial and service are not practiced?

3. What do you think about the statement that "too many of our meetings in the church are just talk"?

4. How is Christian idealism like the compass on a steamship?

5. A school trustee forbade the playing of games at school. He said to the teachers, "We send our children to school for you to learn 'em to work, not to play." What about his everyday religion?

6. A prominent church leader, who talks about the nearness of God, has a tenant on his farm whose family is often sick because the house is unscreened, the drinking water is impure, and the work is too exacting. What attitude did Jesus take toward such religious leaders in his day?

7. A pastor preached a straightforward sermon on law enforcement, and the paper came out the next week advising "all ministers to stick to the old-time gospel." Was the editor referring to Jesus' gospel?

8. Does a person usually have the spirit of service who stays away from the grange or farm bureau with the excuse that "a few are tryin' to run it"?

CHAPTER II

NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERINGS

Friends

When our Saviour approached Gethsemane he yearned for his friends. We all need friends. When Kingsley was asked the secret of his life he replied, "I had a friend." When life gets dull and monotonous, when parents argue, children quarrel, and neighbors gossip, then we need to get away from routine work, away from rigid duty, and enjoy the fellowship of our friends. These neighborly gatherings, get-togethers, or picnics keep us from drying up socially; that is, they give us the spirit of neighborliness. A community without picnics and socials is full of gossip and fault-finding. When neighbors get together they find they like each other better than they thought they did. Jesus, who gave us the parable of the good Samaritan, puts within the heart of his followers this spirit of good will, friendliness, and love for their neighbors. But we must cultivate this spirit of neighborliness by meeting with our neighbors. We must practice being good neighbors. The spirit of good will grows best at community meetings or neighborhood gatherings. The bonds of Israel were strengthened by their many feast days. The Jews had seven principal festivals during the year: the Passover, Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of Lights, and the Feast of Purim. One of these—the Feast of Tabernacles—is thus described in Deuteronomy:

Scripture Lesson

Deut. 16. 13-15.

13 Thou shalt keep the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in from thy threshing-floor and from thy wine-press: 14 and thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, and the sojourner, and the

fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. 15 Seven days shalt thou keep a feast unto Jehovah thy God in the place which Jehovah shall choose; because Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the work of thy hands, and thou shalt be altogether joyful.

Jesus observed the Jewish feast days and also attended the social meetings of his Galilean neighbors.

John 2. 1-13.

1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there; 2 and Jesus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage. 3 And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. 4 And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. 6 Now there were six waterpots of stone set there after the Jews' manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast. And they bare it. 9 And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants that had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom, 10 and saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when *men* have drunk freely, *then* that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now. 11 This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and *his* brethren, and his disciples; and there they abode not many days.

13 And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Changes in One Community

The Jews have been persecuted and scattered throughout every land, yet they have kept their spirit of unity, strengthened by the social as well as by the racial bonds. Jesus observed these meetings. His first miracle was performed at a meeting of Galilæan neighbors in Cana. The prayer he taught us begins "Our Father." The kingdom of heaven comes to our community through the cooperation of regenerated lives. We must play together, work together, and worship together.

How this spirit of neighborliness, good will, and coop-

eration can be brought about is illustrated in one needy community. After jolting along on a rough, slow train through great forests of pine sprinkled here and there with oak or magnolias, and now and then through large clearings, the new minister and his wife finally arrived at the station nearest the country church to which they had been sent. She busied herself in the grocery store, writing her first impressions back home, while he sought for a way for them to "catch a ride out" to the new parish. Hospitality and kindness are the chief characteristics of country folk, and he soon found a means of transportation. As the mule team traveled slowly over the rough roads, many questions about the new parish were asked. The houses they passed on the way, unpainted, unplastered, and unpapered, were made of twelve-inch boards put on end. The familiar one-mule cultivator was fighting back the weeds in the fields of cotton, corn, or "goobers." The only bit of beauty or comfort in evidence was the roomy fireplace of each cabin, the smoke from which curled upward through the pines. This is the section of our country about which most of our American songs have been written. But God has dealt better with this community than has man. For life here is just a monotonous round of working, eating, and sleeping. There is preaching once a month. The overcrowded country school has only a short term. Neighborhood kindness is expressed in Sunday dinners; but there are few if any gatherings where culture is taught, or ideals cultivated.

The big house where the preacher was to stay was reached at last. It was one of the six painted houses out of a hundred and fifty homes. A typical company dinner was soon ready—ham, corn bread, gravy, hot biscuits, sweet potatoes, molasses, and custard pie. "Just turn up your plates and help yourselves" was the way the diffident hostess had of starting the meal.

Soon the pastoral visitation began, for only thus could the minister find out the specific needs of his parish. His program was to be made as a result of a study of the home and community needs.

There were many children and young folk. In each of two homes ten children were found; in two more, nine.

Most families had at least six under their roof. Eighty-one families lived within five miles of the church, all of them with many needs. They had no play days, no athletic teams, no women's organizations, no place for self-expression. It was just one fine, big community of inertia. The lack of diversified farming and of cooperative marketing kept the people poor. Buying everything on credit kept them in debt. Living out of the store instead of the garden and orchard was a drain on their income as well as on their health. There were no magazines in the homes and few flowers around the houses. Calendars and post cards were the only wall decorations except the usual motto: "God bless our home." But God seemed to be overlooking these well-meant petitions.

At the first church service, when everybody "met up with" the preacher, and the greeting "How you-all?" was passed around, the new program had its beginnings. At church the women took no part in the worship. They sat on one side of the house, and the men on the other. The men at least found this a convenient arrangement, for they were not bothered with the noise of the children; and, besides, they need pass the collection plates only on one side of the house. When the children fell asleep, the mothers held all they could and laid the rest down upon an improvised pallet in the aisles.

Since the burden as well as the joy of the mothers was the care of the babies, the first move in the new community program was a mothers' club. Nurses, doctors, and parents were brought to instruct these mothers of many children in better methods of child care. All phases of homemaking were discussed, even to flowers and paint for the house. The Home Economics Department of the State College of Agriculture helped by sending lecturers and bulletins. Before long one man painted his house. A woman laid in a stock of flower seeds. The homemakers began to "cook" white bread. A canning club was organized, and once a month regularly, to the question "Whar you-all goin'?" the women proudly told of the work of their club.

Before long an all-day "sing" was put on the schedule of the church activities. A dinner-on-the-grounds meeting

brought out seventeen hundred people, all of whom helped with the singing that day. At any rate, it revealed the fact that there were plenty of young people. Baseball, therefore, was next. But it didn't seem quite right to the officers of the church for their young pastor to appear all the more youthful playing baseball. They were accustomed to an older man, an absentee pastor who came once a month when the roads and weather were good. No doubt this aged minister had been very successful at one time, when he was pastor of his city church; but now that he was old he was sent out to this less critical rural congregation. Once a month he came with his long coat, his long face, and his long sermon, and then went back to his home in the next county, while the community slept on until his next appointment. At any rate, the people were used to him. Hence, they liked him and could not quite explain the actions of the new preacher. "It isn't that we care," said members of the committee who came to call on this new pastor, "but the other folks are talking about you. They say you don't look nor act anything like a preacher. You go out on that baseball diamond without a coat, hat, or necktie, and you run around those bases. It isn't that we care, but people of other denominations are talking. When a preacher plays baseball he's gettin' on cramped quarters."

The "baseball minister" explained to the two faithful officials that Jesus won his disciples while they were busy at their tasks, fishing or collecting taxes, and that he hoped to win these boys for Christ on the baseball field. So one day, sitting on a log in Mr. Graham's pasture after a successful game against a difficult team, the pastor, who pitched that day, and the captain of the team, who caught for him, had a long talk about winning life's battles, with the Master of men as their Captain. That evening, as the shadows lengthened through the clump of woods west of the church, this young man selected his Captain for life. He also undertook the task of signing up the other players under his new leader. When the season was ended, nine baseball men were ready for any assignment in the task of building the kingdom of our Lord in this community.

A pastoral visit to any home always gladdened the min-

ister's heart because of the honest hospitality and the united appreciation of his visit, yet never failed to emphasize the absence of beauty or cheer in the daily lives of the parishioners. The houses were void of beauty. There were no rugs on the floor, no draperies over the windows. Beds stood in nearly every room, and there was no real living room, with books and music. Most of the girls had never read a novel. The little touches of embroidered beauty were absent; instead were the oil-cloth-covered table, with long benches on either side, the carbon portraits of deceased relatives on the walls, and the splintery, barren floors. Hence, the next community organization was an embroidery club for girls, which had to meet in two sections because no home could accommodate a full meeting of the group.

When he was lying on the ground at the end of a corn row one July afternoon, talking over the ups and downs of life, the crops, prices, failures, work, the idea of a farmers' club began to grow in the pastor's mind. Some would not join at first, because "they were not members of that sect." One old man swore he'd "never be caught inside that church," so the farmers' club held its meetings for a while under the big tree back of the church to satisfy "the other sects" and the nonmembers. Crop rotation, fertilizers, sanitation, better markets, good schools, and healthier children were all discussed at the regular meetings. A good-roads picnic was arranged, and roads were improved.

But what do all these community meetings have to do with religion? Is this just social service without the old-time gospel? No; it is a very old type of gospel. It goes back to Jesus' time, when he carried cheer and the abundant life to the multitudes in their homes, at their work, in the market place, and in the field. Fourteen members of this farmers' club were received into the church one Sunday morning. Three men of fifty-five years found Jesus as their Redeemer, and one man of sixty-five took him for his Friend for the first time. But the young were the principal goal of the church's endeavors. The Sunday school grew from 128 to 225. Practically all the young people confessed Christ as their Saviour. The kingdom

of our Lord comes to whole communities when they unite their hands with their hearts in practicing Christian neighborliness.

A Changing Attitude

When improvements seem to come slowly, and suggested changes are opposed, we must not lose faith in our neighbors. All progress in neighborly cooperation is made over the protests of a few well-meaning but nonprogressive objectors. There is more progressive neighborhood cooperation to-day in our country than ever before.

The school board of Lancaster, Ohio, in 1838 refused the use of the schoolhouse to a group of young men who wished to debate the feasibility of the railroad and telegraph. "You are welcome to the use of the schoolhouse to debate all proper questions in," reads the document prepared by the school board, "but such things as railroads and telegraphs are impossibilities and rank infidelity. There is no work of God about them. If God had designed that his intelligent creatures should travel at the frightful speed of fifteen miles an hour by steam he would clearly have foretold it through his holy prophets. It is the device of Satan to lead immortal souls down to hell."

We need not be discouraged if someone old in spirit objects to our social program or tries to stop all progressive ideas that suggest a change. While those statements of the school board sound very backwoodsy to us, even to-day we can find a few people who seem to feel that the church house is more important than the church people, and who consequently do not want people to have any good times in the church. But the attitude is changing, and the social life of the neighborhood is rapidly becoming a part of the church activities.

For Young People

Community gatherings are important for the young people. Happy homes depend to a large extent on the opportunities young people have of forming friendships, and of forming them under right conditions. The important thing is to give them a wider circle of friends rather than to limit their acquaintances. In a certain isolated

rural section many weddings take place at revival meetings. These seem to be the only occasions when the young people mingle freely. Think of your daughter spending a lifetime with a husband whom she had known only so short a time and when he was on his best behavior! Community meetings give young folk as well as old a chance to know each other better.

Our Holidays

The value of a holiday celebration lies not only in the fact that everyone goes but also in what they do after they get there. It is not so much that we shall have a chance to visit but that we shall have something to say. Our great need is not simply to get an opportunity to express our ideas but to have some ideas to express, so our holidays must stimulate our thinking as well as our talking. When we start our automobile engine without taking off the brakes, it only makes a noise. Those who worry about the morals of young people should remember that if we can take care of their thinking, their morals will take care of themselves. This means that our holiday celebrations should be managed by some institution like the church or Sunday school, which has certain community ideals. Our neighborhood gatherings should have an educational as well as a social value.

Directed Play

When Miss Lillian Wald went as a nurse to the East Side of New York City she was known by the children as "our play teacher." She founded the Henry Street Settlement and inaugurated the work of the visiting nurse, spending most of her time with the sick; but she also directed a playground, and it was this that made the most impression on the children of the city streets. So they called her their "play teacher." It is well for those who would influence youth to know that the power of influence is given to those who play with young people more than to those who only teach them in the classroom.

Where can honesty be taught better than in a relay race? It is so easy for a player anxious to win to start too soon, to forget to be honest, to break rules in order to come out

ahead. Where can teamwork be taught better than in relay races? If every boy and girl in our Sunday schools played basketball in their youth they would learn enough cooperation to prevent sectarian competition later on. Such games as volleyball, dodgeball, and three-deep teach alertness and courage and furnish much wholesome fun.

Community Play Days

At a play day held in Wisconsin an old man, who had the courage to leave his work for a day to attend the meeting, began expressing his appreciation of the good time they were having.

"Are you enjoying the day, too, Uncle Jim?" he was asked.

"Of course I am," said he. "I only wish these play days came twice a year instead of once."

Without question we would all be healthier and happier if we played more.

Since the purpose of these play days is to have active play for all present instead of a few playing and the rest looking on, a suggested day's program is given:

10 A. M.	Baseball game—boys. Dodgeball—girls. Looby Loo—little children. Pitching horseshoes—men.
11 A. M.	Batball—boys and men. Partner tag—girls and women. Follow-the-leader—little children.
12 A. M.	Picnic dinner.
1:30 P. M.	Singing and short address.
2:30 P. M.	Volleyball—boys. Last-couple-out—girls. Ring-around-the-rosy—little children. Circle-catch-ball—women. Baseball game—men.
3:30 P. M.	Prisoners' base—boys. Three-deep—girls. Here-we-go-round-the-mulberry-bush—little children. Volleyball—women versus men.

4 P. M. Tug-of-war—boys.
Playground ball—girls.
Nuts-in-May—little children.
Passing-relay races—women and men.

Community Meetings

One way of cultivating the spirit of neighborliness is for all to unite in some kind of a community meeting regularly once a month. These meetings could be held in the evenings at the church or could be made an afternoon or an all-day affair. Games similar to those mentioned above should be played at most neighborhood gatherings. At least a thirty-minute period should be given to playing games at each meeting.

The following days or events are among those that could be observed:

January:	Spelling contest. Music night.
February:	Lincoln's birthday—February 12. Washington's birthday—February 22. Bible night.
March:	Saint Patrick's Day—March 17. Arbor Day (day appointed by the Governor). Boys' and girls' club night.
April:	Health day. Poetry night. Parsonage- and church-improvement day.
May:	May Day—May 1. Peace day—May 18. Memorial Day—May 30. Mother's Day—second Sunday in May.
June:	Children's Day—second Sunday in June. Better-country-homes program. Sunday-school picnic.
July:	Independence Day—July 4. Newcomers' social.
August:	Road-improvement day. Community play day.
September:	Labor Day—First Monday in September. Homecoming day.
October:	Columbus Day—October 12. Halloween social—October 31. Reading-and-books program.

November: Armistice Day—November 11.
Thanksgiving Day—last Thursday in November.

December: Christmas—December 25.

Noah may have led his group into the ark one by one or even two at a time, but we do not walk into the kingdom of heaven that way. We belong to one great family or neighborhood, each person influencing every other. Only the few stay good in an evil community. The prayer which Jesus taught us begins "Our Father" and ends with a proclamation of the social gospel: "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory."

Questions for Discussion

1. What unchristian attitudes are apt to be formed by a stay-at-home?
2. The Jews have eight principal festivities each year. How many picnics or neighborhood gatherings were held in this community last year?
3. What should be the principal purpose or purposes of a picnic?
4. What do you think about commercialized amusements? About pay socials at the church?
5. How is play helpful?
6. Which of the annual events or community meetings mentioned above are practical in this neighborhood?
7. Is it the duty of the church and Sunday school to provide for these meetings?

CHAPTER III

OUR SICK NEIGHBORS

Jesus Brought Life

The church for years has cared for the sick. But to-day ideas regarding health are changing. Sickness comes from disease germs, not from ill luck. Preventing sickness is even more Christian than nursing the sick. Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and may have *it* abundantly." To carry out the intentions of our Lord the church is changing its program so as to help keep the people well.

A pastor in Virginia said that the wealthiest farmer in his community thought that flies were healthful.

"We need them," said the manager of this five-hundred-acre-farm, "to eat up the filth."

This man simply did not know. When his pastor arranged with the county health officer to speak in his church on "Flies as Disease Carriers," he woke up. The next day he went to town and loaded his car with screens for his house. He simply hadn't understood the problem before.

Many non-Christian religions teach the defiling of one's body. Devotees torture themselves. They worship in disease-infested temples or bathe in unsanitary streams called holy in their well-meaning but ignorant fanaticism. Jesus taught us the worth of a man's body as well as his soul. Where Christ's gospel is preached throughout the world, there follow hospitals and clinics, doctors and nurses, hygiene and health. This Christian emphasis on health applies not only to heathen lands but to home lands, not only to foreign peoples but to our own community and to our own families.

Scripture Lesson

1 Cor. 6. 19-20.

19 Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are

not your own; 20 for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body.

Rom. 12. 1.

1 I beseech you therefcre, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service.

Luke 4. 18-19.

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Matt. 4. 23.

23 And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people.

Moses, the First Great Teacher of Sanitation

In the Mosaic law strict regulations are given regarding sewage disposal. In Lev. 7. 21 we read: "And when any one shall touch any unclean thing, the uncleanness of man, cr an unclean beast, or any unclean abomination, and eat of the fiesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings, which pertain unto Jehovah, that soul shall be cut off from his people." Read Deut. 23. 12–14 and see how strictly the sanitary laws were enforced in that early period. Even to-day in our Southern States two million people have hookworm simply because they do not observe the simple rules of sanitation given us in the book of Leviticus. The reason the people north of the Mason and Dixon line are free from this plague is not because of any special cleanliness there, but because the hookworm cannot live in the colder climate. Schools can be found which have forty per cent of the pupils infected with hookworm, because proper outbuildings have not been provided at the schools and the homes. Strange as it may seem, the church usually pays the least attention of any institution to these simple sanitary rules.

Other intestinal diseases, such as typhoid fever and

dysentery, can be greatly diminished by proper sewage disposal. In nine counties in North Carolina, in the four years 1914–17, the total deaths from typhoid fever were 478—an average of 119 per annum. In 1918, as a result of an educational campaign against soil pollution in these nine counties, a total of 6,480 fly-proof privies were built. Deaths due to typhoid decreased from 119 to 24, or to one fifth of the former number.

We usually speak of someone as being "a good neighbor" if he willingly lends to us the things we need. If this same man votes against bonds for a sewage-disposal system in his village, is he really a good neighbor?

The yearly expenditure for sickness in the United States is thirty-seven dollars for each family. The neighbor who hands me this bill to pay is not a good neighbor.

People who object to being quarantined for contagious diseases, such as measles or diphtheria, saying, "Quarantine is just another newfangled notion," should read the book of Deuteronomy. Here is an example of the strict biblical ordinances: "If there be among you any man, that is not clean by reason of that which chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp" (Deut. 23. 10).

Health can be made safe even among the most unfavorable circumstances, and no matter what health costs it is a good investment. The expenses of our annual death rate from preventable diseases in the United States, according to the Massachusetts Board of Health, are enough to build in each State twenty hospitals, eight colleges, one hundred libraries, and, in addition, build two transcontinental highways and then have enough money left to increase our appropriations one hundred million dollars to our public schools.

These statements seem exaggerated until we examine a few communities. An experiment was made in Arkansas to rid four towns of malaria. Pools were drained or filled. Sluggish streams were ditched. Oil was applied to surface water. The breeding places of the mosquito were done away with; thus one cause of the malaria was eliminated. In 1916, before the experiment, the number of calls made by physicians in one of these Arkansas towns—Hamburg—

on patients suffering from malaria was 2,312. In 1917, the year the experiment was made, the calls dropped to 259, and in 1918 to 59.

What did health cost in this instance? In this town of only a little more than a thousand population the cost of this experiment to each person was in 1917 only $1.45 and it dropped in 1918 to 44 cents.

In an Arkansas lumber town in Ashley County the local physicians estimated that sixty per cent of all illness was due to malaria. The mosquito was eliminated by ridding the place of all stagnant water. Within one year the malaria in this town decreased seventy-two per cent. The cost per capita for this work was $1.24, and each person saved more than thirty dollars on doctor bills and the loss of time from work due to sickness. Health is a good investment.

Riding along the road with a doctor in Oklahoma recently, the writer passed a big duck pond, to which people come for miles to shoot ducks in the winter and to swim in the summer. "I made a mint of money," said my doctor friend, "from that stagnant pool." The neighbors care for the sick in that community and feel that they are rendering helpful Christian service; but would it not be a greater service, more Christian and more neighborly, for them to drain that pool?

Health Work a Patriotic Duty

Sometimes a man who advocates health measures is blamed by his neighbors for increasing taxes. Even though he is not praised or honored, his service is a patriotic one. He is a true neighbor and a friendly citizen.

Every schoolboy knows of the famous midnight ride of Paul Revere from Charlestown to Lexington to warn the Minute Men of the approaching British troops. It is not a fact so well known that this same daring patriot was chairman of the Board of Health of the city of Boston. In this office he warned his neighbors of as grave dangers as on his midnight ride. The patriot is one who cooperates with the county health officer and the visiting nurse in making his community a safe place in which to live.

One of the world's great patriots and benefactors was

reared in a humble tanner's home in southern France. In college Emile Pasteur was known as "only an ordinary student"; and when he received his bachelor-of-science degree, a note was attached to his diploma on which were written the words: "Only mediocre in chemistry." Yet this humble country lad gave us the germ theory of disease and inaugurated the great modern movement of preventive medicine. He discovered the cause of disease. He found that God doesn't send disease, nor does Satan. It isn't a question of luck. No magician can coax it away. Much of it comes from invisible germs. This was the theory this scientist proved, the theory that has revolutionized the practice of medicine. Pasteur showed the surgeon that if germs are kept away from the wound it will heal. He emphasized the need of quarantining people with infectious diseases. Methods of vaccination were also demonstrated. This man's name is familiar in every household where milk is used. His noble and generous nature is shown by the fact that he refused to patent any of his discoveries. He lived to serve his fellow men and always remained as simple and as affectionate as a child.

The Nurse, a Practitioner of Christian Neighborliness

Most of our Lord's miracles had to do with health. He went about in all Galilee with a great interest in his sick neighbors. Many of his followers to-day meet him daily at the sick bed of a neighbor. It was said of Florence Nightingale, "Wherever there was suffering or sorrow, she was sure to be found." As a small child in rural England she loved nature and animals. Her most delightful play was to nurse and bandage her dolls. Her first living patient was a shepherd's dog. Naturally she studied nursing. When the Crimean War broke out, a letter from the secretary of war asking her to go as a nurse crossed with a letter from her volunteering her services. She turned the appalling hell of the hospital at Scutari into a well-ordered institution. For twenty hours, it was said, she would stand nursing the wounded soldiers; and when the medical officers had retired for the night, she, with a little lamp in her hand, would make her solitary rounds,

always tender and kind to the suffering ones. Soon she was superintendent of all the hospitals on the Bosphorus, with ten thousand sick men under her charge. The enthusiasm aroused in England by her labors of love was indescribable; and when the time came for her return, the government ordered a man-of-war to bring her. But no, she came back on another boat to her quiet home and evaded her triumphant reception in London. Her next neighborly service was to found a home for training nurses. As long as she lived she went about among the sick in order that they "may have life, and may have *it* abundantly."

A similar type of service is seen at Henry Street Settlement, New York City, in the work of Miss Lillian Wald, who inaugurated visiting nursing in this country. In 1890 there were only twenty-one associations in the United States employing visiting nurses. To-day more than ten thousand nurses are engaged in this type of work. These messengers of mercy and health are employed by school boards, by county officials, and by the Red Cross. No man who prays: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," should vote against employing a visiting nurse.

The signposts to health are:

Breathe deeply.	**Sleep regularly.**
Eat temperately.	**Work planfully.**
Chew thoroughly.	**Exercise daily.**
Drink (water) copiously.	**Serve willingly.**
Clean teeth carefully.	**Speak kindly.**
Bathe frequently.	**Play some.**
Eliminate freely.	**Read some.**
Laugh heartily.	**Think some.**

Dare to be yourself—cheerful, conscientious, brave.

Health Education

People who say, "I would rather die than go to a doctor," usually get their wish, and get it early. They think they know a great deal about health, but they know it wrongly. Many families spend more for patent medicines than for medicine prescribed by a doctor. What is needed in every community is health education. Talks to mothers about the proper care of babies and baby clinics are practical and helpful. Medical examination in the schools

prevents neighborhood epidemics and keeps children and young people healthy. In many communities there is conducted a good-health test, a health conference, or a lecture course on public health. Ministers are observing health Sundays. The story of the good Samaritan is being lived again in these ways.

A Modern Parable

A tenant farmer was sick and weary. The weeds were taking his crops. The future looked dark for him.

A representative of the missionary board of his church came by, made a survey, took some pictures, prepared a report, and hastily returned to headquarters.

A high official of the church learned with regret of the man's misfortune and sent him a copy of his latest book on *The Common Fellowship of Sorrow.*

The local pastor heard of the tenant's plight from his landlord, with whom he was spending the day. The landlord was concerned for his neglected fields. The pastor's heart was touched. He wondered why he hadn't called on the sick man long before. The next day he plowed the man's corn. His wife came too and touched with hope and love the sick household. The next day a nurse was brought. The pastor persuaded the landlord to have the house screened. He kept other members of the family from the fever.

The worn and weary wife shed tears of gratitude and joy. But the oldest daughter was unmoved and bitter, saying in her heart with resentment, "If thou hadst come earlier, my father would not have taken sick."

Questions for Discussion

1. Who is to blame for the death of a baby: (*a*) if it contracted disease from impure milk because its father kept a dirty stable? (*b*) if the impure milk was bought from a milk dealer? (*c*) if it contracted its disease from impure water from the well on the farm which the family was renting? (*d*) if the sickness was caused by lack of screens on the house?

2. What in the life of Jesus showed that he was interested in health?

3. Are there any swamps in this community where mosquitoes are bred?

4. Which costs more—screens for the house or a funeral?

5. Which kind of a sermon is more in harmony with the teachings of Jesus—a talk showing why our denomination is the best or a talk on health?

6. Which is the best way of helping a mother in the home: (*a*) to cheer her up with the idea that she will get a rest in heaven? (*b*) to wait until she gets sick and then send her to a first-class hospital for treatment? (*c*) to explain to her on Mother's Day the joys of self-sacrifice? (*d*) to arrange for an occasional vacation for her so she can keep well?

CHAPTER IV

OUR HOMES

Practice Religion at Home

A husband and wife in the Middle West recently celebrated their golden-wedding anniversary. The neighbors congratulated them on their fifty happy years together. Yet during that time the man's wife had walked, while carrying water into the house, as far as to Los Angeles and back.

Suppose she had actually walked to Los Angeles and back carrying a pail of water. The newspapers would have sent reporters to interview her along the way. They would have taken a picture of her "leaving Kansas City" or "entering Albuquerque" or "crossing the deserts of Arizona." Editorials would have appeared condemning any husband who would make his wife walk so far carrying a pail of water. The editor would explain how much cheaper it would be for him to buy her a round-trip ticket, and someone would suggest that this husband, who claimed to love his wife so much, should be sent to the insane asylum.

Take a paper and pencil and figure up the distance traveled by a woman carrying water into the house and you will find that not one but many farmers' wives walk as far as from Saint Louis to Los Angeles and back during their married life, carrying a pail of water. A system of running water in the house would save all of such drudgery. About one out of ten farm houses now have running water.

Once a year we celebrate Mother's Day at the church. We listen to a sermon about the sacrifices of our mothers. But how far should our religion help us in preventing these sacrifices in the future? Is an autocratic home Christian? In some homes "might makes right." If Jesus' teachings were followed, how would our homes be changed? The Bible contains many verses that show us that a home should be a Christian fellowship.

Scripture Lesson

1 Tim. 5. 8.

8 But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.

Josh. 24. 15.

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.

Eph. 6. 4.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.

Prov. 3. 33.

33 The curse of Jehovah is in the house of the wicked;
But he blesseth the habitation of the righteous.

Eph. 5. 25.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it.

Gen. 18. 19.

19 For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Mark 5. 19.

19 And he suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and *how* he had mercy on thee.

Gal. 6. 2.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

A Vacation

It is easier to be religious at church than at home. But I would not vote for a man for superintendent of the Sunday school or teacher of the Bible class who had never arranged for his wife to have a vacation. Keeping house and caring for children is so much of a strain, there is so much drudgery about it, that many men are "taking things into their own hands," as they say, and are arrang-

ing for someone to care for the children while they take their wives away for a brief vacation at least once a year.

"I haven't had a vacation in fourteen years" were the plaintive words of a mother of three children. "Yes, I really have had three vacations since I've been married—the three times I went to the hospital. Sometimes I feel so tied at home I want to just run away. I say to Charlie, 'It is such a nice afternoon, I think I'll take a little walk.' 'It is a nice day,' he says; 'let us take the children and all go.' So I never get away from my work and my children. Few men realize how tied at home most of us mothers feel."

Saving Steps

The way we treat other members of our family is not written down on the church roll nor reported upon by the secretary of the Sunday school, but it is very important nevertheless. A father who asks his wife to hunt up the number for him each time he talks over the telephone need not be surprised that this same mother must hunt for a half hour for their son's hat. A girl who hurries off to lead the Epworth League and leaves her mother with the Sunday dishes to wash is not practicing what she preaches. If, however, we expect the young people in the home to show consideration we must both set them the example and cultivate in them the habit.

A young-looking mother living in a neat New Jersey home said, "It is hard to teach my family to pick up their own things, but it doesn't seem fair to pick up after them all of their lives." Teaching children to pick up their toys may seem a small matter, but it is starting them right on life's journey if they are to practice helpfulness and the proper consideration of others.

Convenient Houses

Some houses are apparently built for looks, some for entertaining company, and some for the convenience of the housekeeper. Beside the road in the beautiful country of Pennsylvania stands a stately farmhouse—"the old home." Here company often came. Many, many times the long walnut table in the dining room "groaned" in

front of happy guests. Passers-by remarked about the "beauty of the lawn," "the roses in the front yard," and "the big white house." The five children could always bring their playmates here. As time passed, and the playmates became "company," no complaint was heard from the long-suffering mother regarding the extra work. After the five children had gone into homes of their own, still they gathered around the old table for Thanksgiving dinners and other homecomings. At one of these reunions the inconvenience in the arrangement of the house was discussed. There were ten rooms, but not a clothes closet anywhere. The kitchen was large and long, with no labor-saving equipment, not even a shelf. The dining room was large, built for guests, and not to save work. And where do you think the pantry was? Not near the kitchen, to save steps, but off from the farther end of the dining room. And where do you suppose the cellar was dug? Under the kitchen or dining room so as to be handy? No, under the parlor, because it meant less digging there. And to go upstairs one went out to the front hall, for the back stairs were too steep to be usable. Back of the house on the hillside was a spring from which the water was piped. No one seemed to think of piping it into the house. For fifty winters the mother had gone out and kneeled down on the icy rocks and dipped up the water needed. These things were all discussed at this family reunion by the five children.

"We will put in a dumb waiter," said one of the sons, "to save going up and down the cellar so much."

"It will be a simple matter to put running water into the house and build a sink and a bathroom," said another.

Paper and pencils and a yard stick and a desire to save steps for the aged mother produced plans for hot and cold water, a built-in kitchen cabinet, and all sorts of conveniences. And then the carpenters came, and the stonemasons, and finally the painter and the plumber. They had all finished their work except the plumber, when the aged mother, after fifty years of toil, suddenly entered into her long rest. The children had remodeled the house too late. Why do we keep on praising the sacrifice of our

mothers when the better thing to do is to make these sacrifices unnecessary?

When we say a house is modern we mean that it has a good heating and lighting system, that it has clothes closets in the bedrooms and shelves built into the kitchen walls and perhaps a built-in kitchen cabinet. A laundry room is built back of the kitchen, and a play room for the children is on the first floor. Many of the newer houses are bungalows to save climbing upstairs. Modern houses cost little more to build than the big, uncomfortable ones with no conveniences.

Labor-Saving Machinery

There are always those who object to improvements in the home. One man said, "My wife should get along with this house if my mother did." But they do not argue thus about the farm. One machine after another has been adopted for the purpose of saving labor. The scythe has given place to the mower. The self-binder has taken the place of the reaping hook. The big combination harvester that cuts and threshes the grain is a great contrast to the old cradle. The farmer rides when he plows. He digs potatoes with machinery. The wind or perhaps a gasoline engine pumps his water. The cows are sometimes milked by machinery. The horses pull the hay into the mow. A gasoline engine fills the silo. The farm buildings are arranged to save steps. The harness is hung behind the horses that wear it. The hay is stored above the stock that eats it. The silo is built adjoining the stable. The corn crib is next to the pig pen. Water is piped into the dairy barn. With the scarcity of farm help and the gradual shortening of the work day labor-saving equipment is necessary on the farm.

But what about the labor-saving equipment inside the house? Someone says, "There aren't as many labor-saving devices on the market for the house as there are for the farm." This would indicate that there hasn't been a sale for them. Yet when we look around we find many such household devices. There are the motor-driven washer and wringer, which save much back-breaking labor. The vacuum cleaner is the housekeeper's friend. A kitchen

cabinet saves innumerable steps. Is running water more necessary in the dairy barn than in the house? A heating plant as well as a lighting system is found in modern houses. Furthermore, much of the labor-saving equipment for the house is inexpensive compared to farm machinery. A family can buy a dust mop, a pressure cooker, an electric iron, and a motor for the sewing machine all for less than half the cost of a mowing machine or a disc harrow.

Someone says, "The household equipment isn't used as much of the year as farm machinery." A system of running water in the house would cost less than a tractor. Which is used more days in the year? A kitchen cabinet costs less than a mowing machine. Which is used more often? A house could be thoroughly equipped with every labor-saving device known for what it would cost to build a silo or buy a truck or a tractor.

After all, it is not a question of money or usability; it is simply a question of attitude. Are we fair? Are we considerate of others? Do we wish to make other lives easy and happy? Religion affects our home life. Here we are our real selves. An attitude of consideration and helpfulness for each member of our family is a better index of our religion than what we say in church. I would rather ask a man's wife about his religion than his pastor.

A Changed Attitude

Jesus brought Christian democracy. When one member of the family rules the others with an iron will, we have tyranny. This condition in the home is contrary to the teachings of the New Testament. When each does as he pleases, we have anarchy. Families cannot exist by this method. Where each member of the family is a partner in the business, we have Christian democracy. In a real Christian home all cooperate in work and in play, in saving and spending, in school plans and in church plans.

Let us examine the non-Christian home and see the attitude there: "Hear me," said a fiery Urdu in northern India. "Let us now consider the shameful wrong and harm which the hated English Raj has brought even into the sanctity of our own homes. Perhaps we could even forgive the other wrongs, but can we ever forgive the

wrong the white man's rule has done our women? You all know of the modesty and humility with which our women were endowed in olden days. Have not our fathers told us how the women of the household conducted themselves before the coming of the English influence and education? Why, in those days it were a shame for a woman to be seated while her lord stood, or while any man of her family was standing. Nay, she must not even sit upon a low bed, even after her master sat down in a chair; but if she sat at all, it must be upon the floor. Then was she ready to do his service, quick to do his bidding. But what do we find now? Let our own hearts answer. Do the women of our homes rise from their seats upon the bed when we enter? Nay, they do not think it shame even to sit upon chairs in our presence. I tell you, if this destructive rule is not speedily driven from our land, our women will begin to think themselves our equals. And if a man cannot be master in his own house, sad is his lot. God forbid the coming of that day when our modest and gentle women should go about with the boldness of the white women, demanding and receiving honor from their husbands which no woman can ever be worthy to receive."

It is this type of non-Christian home in India and also in our own land which the Christian religion seeks to change.

Religion in the Home

Family cooperation is the key to family worship. The family altar died under the old patriarchal type of family life in America. We may scare our children into obedience. We may insist on their sitting still during family worship, but history has shown us that these same children when grown have not always cherished the family altar.

Religion in the home must be made attractive, something in which all members of the family can have a part. If a psalm is read in family worship, why not let the children take turns in doing the reading? A little book containing special selections from the Bible, with explanations, like Fosdick's *The Manhood of the Master* or Bosworth's *Christ in Everyday Life,* is better understood than a long, unexplained chapter from Leviticus or Revelation. Excel-

lent manuals of devotion are available which provide a brief service of worship, Scripture reading, a selection from other religious literature, and a prayer.[1] Such a service may be conducted preceding or following the morning or evening meal, and its influence hallows the entire day.

Instead of the same member of the family saying grace at the table a thousand times a year, it will add to the interest of the children if they all take part. They might sing in concert such a prayer as:

"God is great and God is good,
And we thank him for this food;
By his hand must all be fed:
Give us, Lord, our daily bread."

It is important to vary the words as well as the method of the family devotions. Another prayer for the whole family to repeat at the table is:

"For these and all thy gifts of love
We give thee thanks and praise.
Look down, O Father, from above
And bless us all our days."

Prayers should be changed to suit the special needs of the family. For example, if the children are having a "quarreling spell," such a prayer as this may be used:

"Dear Father in heaven, we thank thee to-day
For food and for clothing, for work and for play;
Now help us all gladly to do what is right,
And keep us from quarreling till bedtime to-night."

Small children like motion prayers. Even the baby can imitate the movements of the others. Prayers such as the following can easily be learned:

"We fold our hands, that we may be [fold hands]
From earthly play and work set free;
We bow our heads as we draw near [bow heads]
The King of kings, our Father dear.
We close our eyes, that we may see [close eyes]
Nothing to take our thoughts from thee;
Into our hearts we pray thee come,
And may they each become thy home;
Cast out the sin and make us free;
Pure like the Christ Child may we be.

[1] One such Manual is *The Book of Worship: For Use at Table on Every Day of the Year*, Barclay. The Methodist Book Concern.

This is the prayer we bring to thee.
Then open our eyes thy light to see [open eyes],
Lift up our heads to praise thee still [lift heads],
Open our hands to do thy will [open hands].

The evening prayer and bedtime stories are the days' benedictions. Here life's ideals are formed, sympathy is developed, benevolence grows, family affection is sealed, and the presence of God is made real. The familiar prayer is easy to learn:

"Now I lay me down to sleep;
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
Thy love be with me through the night
And keep me safe till morning light."

Another prayer of which children are fond is this:

"Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me:
Bless thy little lamb to-night.
Through the darkness be thou near me;
Keep me safe till morning light.
All this day thy hand hath led me,
And I thank thee for thy care;
Thou hast clothed me, warmed and fed me;
Listen to my evening prayer.
Let my sins be all forgiven;
Bless the friends I love so well.
Help me make this earth a heaven,
Fit therein for all to dwell."

At the end of a day's work in a home where consideration for others and helpfulness are practiced, and where religion is a family affair, as the last task of the day is completed, and the children are tucked away by tired hands, there is something in the heart that gives one the conception of the folding of angels' wings. As in the far North the golden rays of the sunset fade into the gray dawn of the morning, so will a loving Christian spirit steal into the hearts and lives of the family circle.

Questions for Discussion

1. Which has more improved machinery for saving labor—the housewife or her husband? Why?

2. Whose fault is it that the new houses are not modern—that is, do not have running water, a bathroom, built-in conveniences, clothes closets, and laundry room?

3. What have you to say for a man who puts an umbrella on his riding plow and expects his wife to stand over a kitchen stove without the use of a gas or oil heater in the summer months?

4. What labor-saving devices for the house would you suggest?

5. Suggest a way of caring for the small children at Sunday-school picnics and similar gatherings, so that the mothers can enjoy the outing.

6. Discuss a plan for a mothers' room in the church—a room where babies can be cared for during the services.

7. How often should a mother have a vacation?

8. Discuss Mother's Day programs in which the sacrifices of the mothers are praised, and we wear flowers in their honor. What would you think of letting the mothers wear the flowers?

9. How can the custom of family worship be established in more homes in this community?

CHAPTER V

OUR CHILDREN

The Child in the Midst

When the great Lincoln was passing through the stress and strain of the Civil War, his days were burdened with the large number of impatient callers at the White House. Great generals came to talk over future campaigns. Governors brought requests from war-weary people. Senators came to talk to the Great Emancipator about the affairs of state. Regardless of rank these important guests had to wait outside Lincoln's office in the White House until he could see them. Sometimes they stood in line all day before the busy war President called them. While waiting, the anxious visitors would watch a small boy slide down the stairs and go in and out of the President's office at will. Why should these men of renown be compelled to stand in line while one small boy had ready entrance to the President? The secret was that this boy was none other than little Tad Lincoln. Being the President's son, he had this coveted access to his father's presence. Children are the center of every complete home, be that home great or small, rich or poor. When Jesus wanted to teach his disciples about the kingdom of heaven he put a small child in their midst.

Scripture Lesson

Matt. 18. 1-6.

1 In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2 And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me: 6 but whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that

a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and *that* he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.

Mark 10. 13-16.

13 And they were bringing unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God. 15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. 16 And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

The Kingdom of Heaven

Jesus did not tell us that the kingdom of heaven was a place but he said it was a company. It was made up of children and of people with child hearts. One day when he had his arms full of boys and girls he said, "To such belongeth the kingdom of God." The only time the Master showed great displeasure toward his disciples was when they kept the children away from him. The severest punishment he ever recommended—that of hanging a millstone around a man's neck and throwing him into the sea —was for the heinous crime of offending a child.

In the light of Jesus' attitude on this subject let us examine again our attitude toward the children in our midst, in our homes, in our church, in our community. Let us see what we are doing for their health, their play, their work, their religious life.

Our Best Farm Crops

A group of farmers and their wives met one evening at their church to hold what they called a forum. They talked about "hard times," "high taxes," "low prices for their produce," and "the scarcity of help." Finally, the chairman asked them what was their principal crop. The replies were "oats," "fruit," "potatoes," "hay," "milk." Finally, one woman shyly ventured the answer: "Our boys and girls." This reply evoked laughter as well as approval. Did these parents really believe this? Before the meeting the subject of discussion outside the church was "automobiles" and inside the church was "chickens." Let us

study the community. One farmer present was a graduate of the agricultural college, where for four years he studied how to take care of calves. Nobody in that community had taken a course in the care of babies. This farmer raised ninety-nine calves out of a hundred that were born; but for every hundred babies born in that section of the State only ninety lived to the age of one year. This man balanced rations for the calves. He had a dozen books on animal husbandry. More than fifty per cent of the farmers in this community pooled their cabbage and potatoes. Every man but one voted against the consolidation of their schools. They put on a very successful campaign for the eradication of bovine tuberculosis. Although they were busy farmers the leaders went from house to house to get every man signed up for this cattle test. Those cows that reacted to the test were immediately killed. They have now what they call "clean herds." But the teacher, when asked about the medical examination in the schools, said: "Yes, we have a doctor come each year to examine the children, but it amounts to nothing. The children take home the examination card, and nothing is ever done about it." Notwithstanding some of these discouraging facts the shy woman in the meeting was correct, for the boys and girls of that community are its principal crop.

Clean Herds

The health of our children should become of greater concern to every parent than clean herds. Public-health officials tell us that with proper child care one third of the young lives that are now needlessly sacrificed can be saved. Ten nations have a better record in infant health than the United States. But parents are becoming much interested in improvement as they come to know the facts in the case. When mothers learn from public-health officials that ten bottle-fed babies die to one fed at the breast they quickly undertake to remedy the dangers of artificial feeding. Likewise, other methods of child welfare are now receiving much emphasis, such as fresh air for babies, sufficient sleep, absolute protection from flies, sleeping alone, daily baths, and the elimination of those old disease-carriers which we used to call "pacifiers." We

are learning that a "devoted mother" is not enough; she must be an "informed mother" as well.

The essence of Christian living is service. A Christian in the countryside is interested not only in his own children but in the boys and girls of the whole community. He is what the newspapers call "a public-spirited citizen." He will not be satisfied with simply examining the adenoids, tonsils, teeth, and eyes of his own children; he will back up the medical examination and health classes in the school. This will be a part of his everyday religion. A keen interest in community health to-day is an indication that a Christian man or woman has caught the spirit of the Master.

The Child the Center of the Home

Jesus placed a child in the midst of his disciples to teach them the meaning of the kingdom of heaven. This kingdom begins in our homes, where the center of love and interest is the children. It is a question whether the children really are the center of a home where they have no playroom, but where a large parlor is fitted up for company. The parents who naggingly guard their upholstered furniture for guests and who provide no playroom for the children will not be bothered after the children reach their late teens. Parents who don't believe in children's play are the ones who later sing, "Oh, where is my wandering boy to-night?" An Ohio father shot his boy's pet pigeons one morning. The next morning the boy ran away from home. Children must play to grow. Happy is that home which bears the marks of children's play. If you want your children to *stay* on the farm you must give them a chance to *play* on the farm.

Each evening when he comes home a California father is met by his two small sons with the question "What shall we three boys play?" One room in this house is a playroom. In the back yard are a swing, a sand box, a seesaw, and a slide, all of which this father made. The children are the center of this home. These same parents are always ready to assist with the work of the daily vacation church school, because they see the importance of child life in kingdom building.

A certain mother in New York State takes great delight in arranging her house so that the children have a place in it. On baking days the children bake something too. When she sews, they have a needle and thread. Her buffet contains her silver on one side and the children's play dishes on the other. Certain space in the bookcases is allotted to the children's books. She has a desk, and so do they. Their pictures hang on the walls of their rooms. Cradle Roll certificates and large pictures of cows, trains, and engines hang side by side. The children help plan the Sunday dinner as well as the picnic lunches. Likewise, they take part in the family worship. They always say grace at meals in concert. Generally their evening prayer includes the sentence, "And we thank thee, Jesus, for our happy time at home to-day." This mother's greatest joy is her children, her highest hope is their future, her greatest calling is parenthood. Jesus used people with this attitude toward children to illustrate what he meant by being "the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Sunday-school teaching for this mother of three children is not a burden. She finds it easy to teach on Sunday what she has been practicing all week.

If our children really became the center of our homes, there would be a lot of second-hand furniture for sale. Doll furniture and a kiddy kar would take the place of some of our "company furniture in the parlor." The "center table," with its load of breakables, would be stored in the attic to make room for children's play. The garage might be used for a playhouse, and the price of the automobile might be needed to send John to high school or to college. Father would at least spend as much time building play equipment for the children as he does tinkering with the car. Mother would guard the bedtime story hour for her children as carefully as she would any other engagement. The stories of Peter Rabbit, Little Black Sambo, Chicken Little, Epaminondas, the Three Little Pigs, the Three Bears, and Little Red Hen would be more familiar to her than the ritual of her lodge. The farm would be big enough for the children's pets. Mary's calf would not grow up to become someone else's cow. The parents, though burdened with work to keep back the weeds and

the debts, would still find time for birthday parties and children's picnics. There are a large and increasing number of homes that revolve around the interests of the children. "To such belongeth the kingdom of God."

Children the Center of Community Life

Many churches in the open country are conducting daily vacation church schools. Trucks are used for bringing the children to the church. Paid as well as volunteer workers are used. In some of these churches the attendance at vacation time is more than a hundred. Boys and girls are brought from distances of six or eight miles. These churches surely believe that children are the most important factor in community life. You would not say this same thing, however, about churches that send the children into a damp basement for their Sunday-school instruction.

Many communities have every possible improvement in the school—play equipment for the outdoors, hot lunches at noon, sanitary drinking fountains, maps, charts, movable desks, modern lighting and heating facilities. Yet there are other communities where the dairy barn is more up to date than the schoolhouse. Here is a schoolhouse with the light coming in from four sides. The building is on a windy hill and poorly heated. It is reported that in one such community on a very cold day the children had to go across the road to a school trustee's barn to get warm.

Here is a village of 858 people. It has six lodges, five card clubs, five churches, the G. A. R., the American Legion, a good movie theater, a dance hall, a fireman's hall, and a chamber of commerce. But its parent-teacher association was disbanded because no one would become its president. Three people were elected but refused to accept the responsibility. The retiring president said that during the year thirty persons had refused to help with the monthly meetings. This organization has for its task "to promote the best interests of parenthood, to raise the standard of home life, to further a better understanding and closer relation between home, school, church, and state." One would hardly say that the children were the center of community life in this village. The attitude of

the people here is expressed in their buildings. The schoolhouse, built twenty-five years ago, is too small for an efficient program. There is no room in it for classes in home economics, and the only gymnasium in the building is in the unfinished attic. There are no classes in homemaking in the school "for lack of room," yet there are seven dining rooms and seven kitchens in the lodges and churches operated mainly for adults! Any one of the lodge dining rooms is large enough to seat the whole high school. There is a recreation club for men but none for boys. The home bureau—an organization of women for home improvement and child welfare—has fifteen members—less than any one of the five lodges or five card clubs.

Let us examine our own community to see if we put the children at the center of community life. Do we give more space to playgrounds or to cemeteries? Do we have a library or an armory? Do we cushion the pews in the church for grown people and send the children to the basement to sit on chairs from which their feet do not reach the floor? Do we spend money on church music for adults or on a director of religious education? Do we spend more evenings in the year helping our children in their home work than we do in reading about congressional investigations and the rise and fall of European governments? Our first responsibility is the rise or fall of our own little republic—that is, our home and the group of homes which make up our community. When the disciples thought they were too busy to give any time to the children, their intentions were good, no doubt; but Jesus rebuked them and showed us the right relation of children to his kingdom.

The Home, a Sending Station of Ideals

A five-year-old boy once crawled halfway up the roof of his father's garage and finally persuaded the busy father to help him to the top. He then dismissed his father, saying, "I just want to sit here and look." Later, when the father returned, the boy's eyes were wandering from hill to hill, from tree to field, from house to distant lake, and on around the circling horizon. Finally, with the joy

and ecstasy of one who had made a great new discovery, he exclaimed, "Daddy, I can see the whole world from here!"

Through the eyes of childhood, as a result of home teaching, from the background of one's early experience, the whole world is seen. The attitudes our children get at home determine their future usefulness. They see the world of work according to the habits of work they get at home. They share with other people and become ministering philanthropists in later life if they learn the principle of sharing around the home fireside. They save and spend carefully according to their early lessons. Their health curve is determined early by their mother's care. They can work with neighbors later if they get along with youthful playmates. If their early Sabbaths are happy family affairs they will bring with them each week a flood of sacred memories. If religion is real, spontaneous, simple, and childlike in their formative years it will shape life's later ideals and attitudes. This, Jesus told us, is the way the kingdom of heaven grows.

Questions for Discussion

1. A girl won three hundred dollars in prizes one summer at county fairs. When her parents told her she could do as she pleased with this money she gave it all to a home for crippled children. How does she illustrate Bible verses in this lesson?

2. A cattle buyer in a small village died recently and arranged through his will for his entire fortune—fifty thousand dollars—to be used to build a mausoleum over his grave. According to our Scripture lesson for to-day did he achieve greatness?

3. In a humble home in a certain isolated hilly community lives a woman who raised her own family, took care of her brother's two orphans, and then adopted a homeless boy from a reform school. Nobody speaks of her as being great. What do you think of her religion?

4. A little village with well-painted homes and attractive lawns each year holds a historical exhibit at which antique furniture and aged relics of all kinds are shown. Histories of the past recounting family trees and early settlers are read. In this same community the junior-

project leader could organize no boys' or girls' clubs because he could find no local leader willing to take charge of them. Where is this community's greatness?

5. A small daughter in the home of a college professor selected as her special playmates children from one of the poorest homes in the community. Had this girl been well trained?

6. We hear considerable about the coming of the millennium. As to determining when it shall come what would you think of one entire generation of children loved as they ask to be, understood as they expect to be, and trained as they should be?

CHAPTER VI

FARM BUSINESS

Prosperous Farmers

When the Israelites crossed over the Jordan into the Promised Land they changed from nomadic herdsmen to dirt farmers. If they could learn to obey, they were promised many blessings—good crops, increasing herds, full granaries, children, and money to loan out at interest.

Scripture Lesson

Deut. 28. 1-12.

1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that Jehovah thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth: 2 and all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God. 3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. 4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy beasts, the increase of thy cattle, and the young of thy flock. 5 Blessed shall be thy basket and thy kneading-trough. 6 Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

7 Jehovah will cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thee: they shall come out against thee one way, and shall flee before thee seven ways. 8 Jehovah will command the blessing upon thee in thy barns, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto; and he will bless thee in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. 9 Jehovah will establish thee for a holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee; if thou shalt keep the commandments of Jehovah thy God, and walk in his ways. 10 And all the peoples of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of Jehovah; and they shall be afraid of thee. 11 And Jehovah will make thee plenteous for good, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers to give thee. 12 Jehovah will open unto thee his good treasure the heavens, to give the rain of thy land in its season, and

to bless all the work of thy hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

This Scripture lesson shows us the importance of obedience to God's commands. Our neighborhood becomes the Holy Land when those who dwell in it have learned obedience to God's laws. Jesus summed up these Old Testament commandments in two verses for us: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12. 30–31). We are to love and obey God and to show a Christian spirit toward our neighbor.

Our Next-Door Neighbor

As Jesus explained in a parable, our neighbor is not at the other end of the Jericho road but is near at hand. His farm perhaps joins ours. It is his cattle that crawl through the line fence and get into our cornfield. How do we act when they do? Does the neighborly spirit between ourselves and the owner of the cows break down? Our religion receives a severe test when the neighbor's chickens scratch up our garden, or when his children romp over our new furniture. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is the way Jesus put it. If we do this we shall show a Christian spirit in all our dealings with the neighbor on the adjoining farm, we shall fix the pen before our hogs break out and get into his sweet-potato patch, we won't let our children take advantage of his good disposition, we shall keep our weeds, as well as our livestock, at home.

This Christian attitude toward near neighbors is seen nowhere better than in many farming communities. Let someone get sick, and in come the neighbors to see if there is something they can do. One woman insists on taking the children over to her house. Another stays to get dinner for the men, and a third drops in to leave an especially prepared dish. The men don't say so much about it, but before long they all come over and plow the sick man's field or put up his hay.

Yet new problems are coming up each year—problems

that call for a new application of Christian neighborliness. We must love our neighbor as ourself after he gets well, and we are trading horses with him, renting him land, or lending him money. If we agree with him to plant wheat late to escape the Hessian fly we must not forget our agreement and think that our one field won't make any difference. Stories are numerous of neighbors agreeing to limit the cotton acreage in order to exterminate the boll weevil and then planting cotton in every field, lot, and fence row. Christianizing our neighborhood relations is the second half of what Jesus called the greatest commandment.

In northern New York State there has been much preaching of special religious blessings. Holiness has been emphasized, and there have been many "mountain-top experiences"; but the federal authorities are having a most difficult time to get the blister rust eradicated from the pine woods there, because the neighbors don't think enough of one another to stick together and to follow certain well-tested methods. As one officer described the situation, "You might just as well tell an Eskimo to put up ice as to ask these lumbermen to help each other save the forests." He also said the pine rust had increased fifty per cent in one year and was destined to exterminate those beautiful pine woods unless the neighbors would pull together. "Bootleggers' paradise" and camp-meeting grounds should not be in the same section of the State. Christian living is a man-sized job if we apply it. A neighborhood organized a community club and bought a hall in which to practice sociability and then quarreled over who was to wash the dishes. A pastor of a country church organized his men into a community-improvement club, but this minister's successor complained because the club used up so much coal at its meetings. Christianizing our close neighborhood contacts is a challenge to our church. Eradicating sin is the first step toward God, but he who has been cleansed should help his neighbors save the lives of babies by eradicating tuberculosis from his dairy herd. A clean herd helps to keep a man's conscience clean. A Christian neighbor has a written contract instead of a lawsuit, a receipt instead of a dispute, a will instead

of a family quarrel. He gets along with people. He has the kind of religion to live by as well as to die by.

The Tenant

The man with whom we have more dealings than with anyone else is our tenant. How do we treat him? Every third farmer in the United States is renting his farm. In those States where there are the most tenants—Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Ohio—the largest number of abandoned country churches are to be found. There are about one thousand closed rural churches in each of these States. Fences and buildings, churches and schools, run down where we rent the old farm and move to town. Tenancy is neither good for the land nor for the community. The bad effects of tenancy in Palestine were prevented by the law that made every piece of land revert to its original owner every fifty years. A few speculators were thus prevented from owning large tracts of land and renting them out. The law regulating this says, "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family" (Lev. 25. 10). God undoubtedly wants his people to be good farmers, or else we should not find in the Mosaic law so many rules about farming.

The attitude of superiority of one owner toward a tenant is shown by the following incident:

The community was discussing the advisability of organizing a social club. The owner's wife said: "If the people around here want something to go to, let them buy a car and go to town. That's what we do. Besides, we have a radio. We hear everything on it—how to dress, the weather reports, concerts, and everything. I wish I were home to-night listening to a concert from Pittsburgh."

The wife of the tenant spoke rather timidly in favor of such a club. "If we had a club here in the neighborhood, I could walk to it," she said. "It seems that now we only have about one thing a year here, and that's Christmas."

A Christian attitude toward our tenant and a concern

for his church and his children's school will be necessary to keep the church in the open country a vital force.

Working With Our Neighbors

No name is more identified with the improvement of farm life than that of Bishop Grundtvig, of Denmark. A destructive war had left his country bankrupt, and another war was brewing with Germany. His people were discouraged. Their spiritual life was at a low ebb, as is always the case after a war. He decided, however, that reforms must come from within, that his people must work out their own salvation. Two methods were chosen. Folk high schools and agricultural schools were established. Adults as well as young men and young women could attend these schools while living and working on their farms. In the second place, cooperative societies were formed among the farmers for handling their produce. They cooperate in buying pure-bred livestock. They make their pork into bacon, their milk into butter and cheese, entirely by cooperative action. They have savings-and-loan associations and mutual-insurance societies. As a result of their buying and selling cooperatively the people of Denmark have the highest per-capita wealth of any European country. Their land, which had been worn out by continual grain farming, has now become the most productive of any nation in Europe. In Denmark it is said, "There are only a few who have too much, and still fewer who have too little."

But the cooperative spirit—the ability to work with our neighbors—is not something to be imported into rural America from Denmark; it is an attitude, a spirit of teamwork, a neighborly feeling, something that we must cultivate and learn to do by doing. In order for neighbors to work together we must have the Christian attitude of sacrificing our own preferences to serve the larger group. A group of men sat around a table one evening forming a cooperative association. They had discussed the principles of successful cooperation—that is, each man should get only one vote and not vote according to the amount of stock a man owns. They all seemed to be clear on the purpose of organizing—to perform a service rather than

to get profits. They had emphasized duties and obligations rather than rights and personal advantages. They also agreed to the method of prorating the earnings according to the amount of business done with the association. When they thought everything was agreed upon, one of the most influential men spoke up and said: "I'm willing to cooperate. I believe in it. But the only way I'm willing to cooperate is on my terms." He had everything necessary for cooperating except the Christian spirit of sacrifice in order to serve the larger number.

One of the ways farmers work together to-day is through the county farm bureau. The first bureau to be organized was in Broome County, New York, in 1911. Now more than twenty-four hundred counties have similar organizations. Through this county farm bureau neighbors work together for soil improvement, for better farm management, for the development of more profitable livestock, and for better crops and markets. It is our religious principles, our Christian attitudes, that give us the spirit of service, which makes us good cooperators. In one rural county five communities were studied. In religious life and successful church work the communities ranked as follows:

Wadhams, first.	**Keesville, third.**
Reber, second.	**Jay, fourth.**

Whallonsburg, fifth

The percentage of farmers in these communities who belonged to the farm bureau was as follows:

Wadhams, 54 per cent.	**Keesville, 30 per cent.**
Reber, 32 per cent.	**Jay, 22 per cent.**

Whallonsburg, 16 per cent.

The neighborly, cooperative spirit, which our religion helps us to get, is the attitude a community must have to join the farm bureau or other similar organizations. Project leaders in the home bureau or in home-economics groups are nearly always active church workers.

Cooperation in America

Cooperation in farm business is needed in America when a man says, as a farmer in Ohio did recently: "No, we

don't sell anything together. If I heard that one of my neighbors was going to sell a load of apples I'd get up before daylight and beat him to town." Religion should change the selfishness in that community into neighborliness.

Cooperation saves money. In a small town in the Middle West there is a man who buys and ships cattle and hogs. He must make a living for his family and pay his hired help. He must also feed the stock he buys until he gets a carload lot. All this expense comes out of the profits of the farmers who sell to him. In a neighboring town is a cooperative shipping association. This organization announces a day when their members shall bring their livestock to the cars for shipping. All the expense of the individual buyer is saved, and in addition the members of the association have the experience of a successful and neighborly venture.

It has been estimated that the farmers of Minnesota save a million dollars a year by cooperative marketing. They reduce the handling costs by concentrating the business. Through the sale of certain commodities cooperatively a market sometimes can be found where there is none otherwise. Through the grading and packing of produce, especially fruit, according to certain accepted standards a higher price is obtained for it. And especially cooperation gets a community to think in terms of "us" and "ours" instead of "me" and "mine." The families in some communities seem to have nothing in common except latitude and longitude. They live at the same place but they think only of themselves. Yet there are enough farmers in the United States with this unselfish attitude who are pulling together in cooperative associations to sell more than two billion dollars' worth of produce a year.

Cooperation is an index of community loyalty. Sometimes one goes into a neighborhood, and someone begins like this: "The trouble with this community is"—and then tells you all its shortcomings. Suppose this man's neighbors had just helped him thresh his wheat or fill his silo or butcher or put up hay or stack his oats or care for his sick: he would have forgotten their faults. When

people belong to the same grange or farm bureau or farmers' union they are more loyal to one another, more neighborly. In a community where the people have a good strong church they are more likely to cooperate in building good, hard-surfaced roads. Mud holes and poor churches are close kin. A study was made by the writer of ninety townships in Ohio to discover the relation between good roads and church attendance. These townships were divided into four groups: those with poor roads, with the poorest, the better, and the best. The divisions were made according to the number of miles of improved roads. It was found that the group with the most miles of improved roads had nearly twice as many church members for each township. The summary of this study is as follows:

90 townships	Improved roads	Church members per township (average)	Members per church (average)
22	no miles	303	55.9
23	44 miles	346	56.0
22	174 miles	375	63.1
23	490 miles	501	100.3

The churches had taught the neighborly spirit, so that the people could work together in improving their roads.

Scientific Agriculture

In the Scripture reading for this lesson we learn that God promised prosperity to the Israelites if they obeyed his laws. God's laws regarding the care of the soil, the selection of pure seed, the proper concern for livestock, are what we usually call scientific agriculture. In the book of Leviticus the people were commanded to keep pure-bred stock and to keep the scrubs out of the herds. "Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let the cattle gender with a diverse kind" (Lev. 19. 9). The farmer to-day who culls his poultry flock and takes out the poor layers, who tests his cows for butter fat and sells the poor producers for beef, is obeying this commandment in the book of Leviticus.

In this same chapter the Israelites were commanded to sow only pure seed in their fields. "Thou shalt not sow thy

field with two kinds of seed," says the command. The successful farmer of to-day not only must cooperate with his neighbor in marketing but is a colaborer with God in producing the world's food supply. To keep from wearing out the soil the best farmers of to-day rotate their crops and use plenty of fertilizer. The law the Israelites followed to keep from robbing the soil was to give the land a complete rest every seven years. "But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath unto Jehovah: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard" (Lev. 25. 4). When a man properly drains his land, carefully selects his seed, testing it sometimes, plows deeply, keeps it free from weeds and pests, fertilizes the soil, rotates his crops, and harvests his grain with improved machinery, we say he is a scientific farmer. The God who sends the harvest has certain laws. Learning these, we increase our yield. Being a good farmer simply means following these laws about the soil and seed, about cultivating and harvesting. Being a good farmer is therefore one way of obeying God's laws.

Colaborers With God

We sometimes wonder about our own religion. Is it sufficient to live by as well as to die by? Let us test it by the way we get along with our neighbors. Let us see if we have learned obedience so that we can work together. Do we obey the laws of God in the way we farm our fields and care for our stock? Do we cooperate with God in helping to feed his creatures? Blessed is he who is conscious of God's presence with him in his daily work.

The Country Church

"I stand in the fields,
Where the wide earth yields
Her bounties of fruit and grain;
Where the furrows turn
Till the plowshares burn
As they come 'round and 'round again;
Where the workers pray
With their tools all day
In sunshine and shadow and rain.

"And I bid them tell
Of the crops they sell
And speak of the work they have done;
I speed every man
In his hope and plan
And follow his day with the sun;
And grasses and trees,
The birds and the bees,
I know and I feel every one.

"And out of it all,
As the seasons fall,
I build my great temple alway;
I point to the skies,
But my footstone lies
In commonplace work of the day;
For I preach the worth
Of the native earth—
To love and to work is to pray."

—*L. H. Bailey.*

Questions for Discussion

1. What laws in the book of Leviticus mentioned in this lesson relate to better farming? See Lev. 19. 19; 25. 4; 25. 10.

2. What were the Israelites told they must do as they crossed over the Jordan into the Holy Land? See the Scripture lesson for to-day.

3. Which is easier—to give money to help the people on the other side of the world or to show a Christian spirit toward one's next-door neighbor?

4. A small group of women withdrew from a home bureau and organized a unit of their own. They put a notice in the paper saying they "would take orders from no one." What have you to say about their neighborly spirit?

5. An officer in a church was greatly angered when he was made to test his dairy cows for tuberculosis. How did he illustrate the second part of what Jesus called the greatest commandment?

6. A church official once proudly said: "We have a fine church. We all own our farms. Hardly a tenant belongs to our church." What do you think about his religion?

7. Explain why the communities with the best churches,

mentioned in this lesson, had the largest percentage of farmers in the farm bureau.

8. In a certain rural community the only public institution is the school. There is no grange, no club, no lodge, no public building but the schoolhouse, which is more than a hundred years old. Does the fact that there is no church here help to explain the situation? How?

9. What attitude would laymen take if ministers in our country should champion the cause of agricultural cooperation, as Bishop Gundtvig did in Denmark?

10. Why are farmers, as a general rule, more religious than people living in large cities?

11. An old man once refused to listen to the instruction of a county agent. "That young fellow can't teach me anything," he said. "I've worn out three farms already." What was wrong with his viewpoint?

12. Explain Pharaoh's dream (Gen. 41. 1–4) in the light of present-day dairying.

13. What do we usually mean by the term "everyday religion"? Do you know people who have it?

CHAPTER VII

RELIGION IN PRACTICE

THE way a man deals with his tenant, sells his produce, lends his money, forecloses the mortgage, weighs and measures his crops, treats his competitor in business,—all these are an index of his Christian life. In our homes, at our work, is where religion begins. A man spends about three thousand hours a year at his daily work and about one hundred hours a year in church. The Old Testament prophets spoke very plainly on this question of everyday religion.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Amos 8. 4-6.

4 Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail, 5 saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit; 6 that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the wheat?

Micah 2. 1-2.

1 Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. 2 And they covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away: and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.

Micah 6. 8.

He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A NEIGHBOR

Christian living is not a creed; it is the way we treat folks. A builder who paints a new house beautifully and papers the inside with fine wall paper but builds it poorly

is taking unfair advantage of the man who buys the house. Jerry builders are poor neighbors and poor Christians.

An editor who writes an article against rotten politicians and decries graft in Wall Street but who prints on another page an advertisement of some patent medicine that sells for a dollar, costs seven cents, and may do seven dollars' worth of harm is taking unfair advantage of his readers.

A landlord who rents unsanitary shacks that ruin the health of tenants' children is just as bad as the tenant who moves out between suns to keep from paying the rent. Each thinks himself better than the other. They are both taking unfair advantage. We call the owner a "rook" and the tenant a "crook."

A farmer in Georgia may go to revival meetings during the entire months of July and August, but if he keeps his Negro cropper in a state of peonage he is the very man to whom Amos is speaking when he says: "Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail!"

A retired farmer in Iowa who exacts all he can get from his renter and thinks not at all of the needs of the renter's family, the renter's school, his church, the lack of screens on the house, the man's future in this world as well as in the next, though this landlord has his name on the church roll he is a liability in the kingdom of good will. He may meet his renter in the next world, but between them there may be a great gulf—the same that was between Lazarus and the rich man.

The politician who shakes hands with people after he is elected, the preacher who talks as straight about the sins of his members as he does about the sins of the Jews, the plumber who comes the day he says he will, the merchant who labels part-wool goods by their proper name, the straightforward, everyday, shirt-sleeved, kitchen-door, blue-Monday Christian is the man that is making the world better.

Pretending Piety

A certain ruler who made himself believe he had kept every one of the commandments came to Jesus once, calling him "good Teacher" and trying to make certain that

he would inherit eternal life. He had got and kept everything he could in this world and was trying to make sure of an estate in heaven. Jesus told this orthodox rich man to sell out and begin the unselfish life if he wanted to be really pious. But this man's piety was only a pretense, for he went back home with a long face and hung on to his riches.

A man in Pennsylvania would not come to the Sunday-evening service, because the preacher of the day in his morning sermon had used an illustration drawn from a baseball game. The visiting minister, inquiring about this ultraorthodox member, learned that he prohibited his daughter from playing basketball at high school, claiming that "we as Christians should not engage in such worldly affairs." But this same man spent considerable time during the week trading horses; and, while the grocers considered him "a very strict church member," they would not sell him goods on credit. Amos speaks of the people who, while strictly observing religious obligations on Sunday, are looking forward longingly to the next day, when they can get hold of more of this world's riches. "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?"

Instead of praying so often, "Lord, bless us," "keep us from harm," and "finally save us in heaven," why not say, "Lord, give me enough grace to pay my debts and deal fairly with my neighbors; to put the best berries in the bottom of the box instead of on the top; to tell the truth about my property to the tax assessor; and to lay up treasures in heaven"?

The manufacturers of a great Eastern city supported the Young Women's Christian Association until it began to preach against the bad working conditions, the long hours, and wages insufficient to allow girls to live healthy, moral lives. Then the organization of employers boycotted the association. Their earlier gifts were simply pretenses at piety. Their charity was a salve for their injustice. Clean linen and churchgoing cannot be substitutes for honesty.

The head of a social settlement in New York resigned, because his trustees asked a man to give to the settlement

money which the worker considered "tainted." The rich man hesitated to give the money because he was afraid the settlement was "irreligious." The wealthy man's daughter, in excusing her father, said, "My father has always been a very devout man." Of both the settlement worker and the rich man could it be said that they "strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel!"

When our pastor gets hot on the scent of sin in our community, let us not drag anything across the trail. Let us not urge him to preach about "the good old days," "the old-time religion," "the simple gospel," or "the faith of our fathers." We know we are simply trying to sidetrack him from talking about our own sins. Let us not pretend to be good while our hand is in someone's pocket. When Jesus met the money changers in the Temple he treated them rough. Let us be orthodox in conduct as well as in creed.

Dishonest Weights and Measures

Everybody knows the command "Thou shalt not steal," but some men will put the brake on the wagon while weighing a load of corn and let the horses lean against the collars. Or they will always be on the seat when the load is weighed but off when the wagon is empty. A Christian can give his testimony on the scales Monday morning when he is weighing his wheat as well as at the church on Sunday. A church member who gives his cattle salt Sunday night so that they will drink more water Monday morning before the buyer drives them on the scales is the same type of a man that Amos described: "Making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit." The ephah contained more than three pecks—when someone did not cut it off a little at the top. Amos' neighbors used scales with weights that might be tampered with. The shekel contained about sixty-four cents' worth of money—when some trader did not make the other poor man pile on a little more. Jesus described this sort of getting ahead. He said such a man was like a thorny field. "These are they that have heard the word, and the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, . . . choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

Stepping on the Man That is Down

A contractor in a Philadelphia suburb notified his employees one day that there would be no more work for them; but he did not pay them off. "Come back in a week," he said, "to get your wages." Seven days later they returned but were paid nothing. He advised them to employ a lawyer to settle their case. The attorney, with whom he had made previous arrangements, advised the workmen to compromise for half their wages to save the expense of a lawsuit. These men, who had been building roads for our new automobiles, lost their jobs, lost two or three days' work trying to collect their pay, and had to pay a lawyer out of the half of the wages they did get. "If you don't like America," we say to them, "why don't you go back home?" Our Christianity is tested by the way we treat people who cannot defend themselves. When they are across the ocean, we may send them missionaries; when they are on this side, do we deal as sympathetically with them? Amos spoke about this taking advantage of people. "That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes."

Adulteration

There was no temptation to put water in the milk when everyone kept a cow. When every house had a garden, no one thought of putting the best fruit on top of the basket. In the days of homespun, shoddy goods were scarce. Nowadays we buy and sell instead of raising things for our own use. With all this increased buying and selling there are new opportunities for adulteration and short-changing; but if we want to find downright, heaped-up, all-wool honesty, we shall usually find it in the country and in the small village.

We do not mean to be dishonest in dealing with folks; we simply want to drive a good bargain, make a slick trade, or come out clear on a bad deal. We forget that this is sin.

We have a horse with a sweeny or spavin. As we cannot use him we put on a "poker face," pretend he is all right,

and sell him to a neighbor. We get rid of the horse, but what a conscience we get instead!

We test our cows' milk, pick out the "star boarders," and sell them. We make our mistake in selling them to a neighbor for milch cows instead of to the butcher for beef.

A fisherman on the east coast of Maryland makes a catch of mud shad. It is all right to sell these if he tells what they are; but to sell them for real shad, which are worth three times as much, is the point where dishonesty comes in.

Let us use the cracked eggs at home and throw away the bad ones instead of trying to sneak them in with the good eggs when we sell them on Saturday afternoon. "Selling the refuse of the wheat" is the way Amos summed up all such dishonesty.

Stealing From the Landlord

Two sisters in Pennsylvania were married, and their husbands, who were good friends, rented neighboring farms. Mabel's husband seemed to be getting ahead at first. He even bought an automobile. But soon his landlord discovered that he was keeping more than his share of the crops and asked him to move off. His reputation went with him; so the next man would rent to him only for cash. He was found to be depleting the soil here, selling or burning the straw instead of putting it back into the land, and not buying the needed fertilizer. Again he had to move. Stella's husband never took advantage of his landlord, never had to move, and has now bought the farm he had been renting. Micah said: "Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practice it."

John the Baptist said, "Extort no more than that which is appointed you." Jesus told of a farmer whose vision was centered on his own barns and granaries. "Thou foolish one" were the words Jesus used in the parable about him.

A man preached a sermon one day against big corporations that mix air with the gas when they sell it and thus steal from the housewives; but this same preacher, going

from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, when he found that it is against the law to sell a reduced clergy ticket between cities in Pennsylvania, but that one can be bought into or out of the State, went across into Wilmington, Delaware, to buy his ticket. He "got by" all right; but how did he treat the big corporation? The mother who holds her seven-year-old daughter on her lap when the conductor comes through the train and tells him her daughter is five should never punish this girl for lying.

Money often chains men, clips their wings, stunts their consciences, keeps down their ideals. We can pluck the sting out of money by being four-square, up-and-down, all-the-time honest in all our dealings.

Carrying Off a Farm

Ahab has always had a bad reputation because he took the life of his neighbor, Naboth, to get his vineyard. To-day we do not follow Ahab's method. We get our neighbor's farm by foreclosing a mortgage. If our neighbor is a Negro in Mississippi we might simply serve notice on him to sell out. On the other hand, we might steal a farm from our children simply by depleting the soil. If I plant cotton or tobacco on the same field for thirty years I have robbed the soil of its fertility and my children of a farm. Loose, sloping soil must be terraced or sown to grass or "cover" crops, else the soil will wash away. "Coveting fields" and "seizing them" were ways in which, Micah said, we could "oppress a man and his heritage."

"His Word Is as Good as His Bond"

This is another way of saying that a man is absolutely honest and truthful. We often say "a professing Christian." May we not also use the phrase "a practicing Christian"? In our Lord's Prayer we say, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Should we not also pray, "Fulfill thy promises to us as we keep our promises to our employees, our family, our neighbors, and our church"? "What doth Jehovah require of thee . . . but to do justly?" said Micah. Stealing church members during a union revival meeting is not

doing justly any more than is stealing cattle on the plains of Wyoming.

Jesus enters our lives and makes us want to be honest. He entered the home of Zacchæus, a hated Jericho publican, who had saved up a lot out of the taxes he had been collecting. When Jesus left that home, the tax collector stood up and said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold."

Christian All the Way Through

A papyrus leaf recently brought to the British Museum from Egypt contained among other sayings of Jesus: "Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and I am there." We find Christ, says this ancient quotation, everywhere. The disciples found him when they were fishing. The Samaritan woman found him when she was carrying water. We meet him in our human relations, in our social fellowships. We find him by "doing justly" and by "loving kindness."

The New Testament gospel is contained in the doings of Jesus as truly as in his sayings. When John became despondent and doubted if Jesus were the Christ, our Lord told the messengers to go back and tell John the things they had seen him do. If the same kind of a committee should come to see if we are his followers, let us hope that we shall be practicing justice and kindness and walking humbly with our God.

Questions for Discussion

1. Are we proud of the way neighbors treat one another in our community?

2. What was wrong with the religion of the horse trader in Pennsylvania who was described in this chapter?

3. Were the sins of the people in the time of Amos different from those of to-day?

4. What have you to say about an officer in a country church who, when he starts to market, always puts his best produce on the top and the worst on the bottom?

5. In what way do we rob God by the way we take care of the soil on our farms?

6. Illustrate from the life of Zacchæus how contact with Jesus makes us desire to be honest.

7. What do you think of the policy of the manufacturers who supported the Young Women's Christian Association until it advocated better working conditions for the young women employees?

CHAPTER VIII

CIVIC DUTIES

It is our civic duty to be good Christians. Likewise, it is our Christian duty to enforce the laws—that is, to assume civic responsibilities in our neighborhood and to make it a better place in which to live.

In some churches we sing,

> **"Onward, Christian soldiers!**
> **Marching as to war,"**

and then we close the book, sit down, and go to sleep while bootleggers flourish in our backwoods. Canaan proved to be a land of bloodshed and battle instead of milk and honey. After comforting ourselves at a camp meeting with thoughts of eternal rest it might be well to run for office in our township or county and produce a clean administration. The monks of the Middle Ages, believing that home was an evil institution, went off into the desert by themselves to be holy, while the world settled back into the Dark Ages. Good Christians to-day see graft among civic officials; but when the election comes, some Christians say, "After you, sir," to every aspirant running for public office—that is, if said aspirant belongs to their political party. We need less handshaking just before election day and more crusading. We sing, "Jesus paid it all," and then often fail to support the institutions in our community that are fighting evil. Let us "take up our cross" and follow after Him. If we get into the job of cleaning up our community and keeping it clean we shall have so many bruises on our heads that a halo would feel uncomfortable. Jesus said, "He that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me."

To study righteousness in the Sunday school and go the next day to a baseball game where gambling is allowed is like sewing a new piece of cloth upon an old garment.

It is a poor-looking job and is likely to tear. To have a successful revival and let the converts get filled up the next month on bad movies or questionable public dances is very poor business. To get sinners saved without driving sin out of the community is like mopping up the water without turning off the faucet from whence the water comes.

Scripture Lesson

Matt. 5. 10-16.

10 Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye when *men* shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do *men* light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. 16 Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Luke 5. 36-39.

36 And he spake also a parable unto them: No man rendeth a piece from a new garment and putteth it upon an old garment; else he will rend the new, and also the piece from the new will not agree with the old. 37 And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the new wine will burst the skins, and itself will be spilled, and the skins will perish. 38 But new wine must be put into fresh wine-skins. 39 And no man having drunk old *wine* desireth new; for he saith, The old is good.

The Old Is Good

The man in Arkansas who prefers to have ague rather than drain the swamps is satisfied. He prefers malaria to new-fangled ideas. "The old is good."

The people who prefer bad roads with mud holes and "thank-you-marms" do not want to be bothered with a road-bond issue. They prefer a stuck-in-the-mud neighborhood. Paying road taxes does not appeal to them.

No one wants the school children to suffer from poor

health, but "we never have had medical examination in the schools: why begin now?"

The old jail is unsanitary, the old church is unsightly, the old schoolhouse is uncomfortable; but "please let me alone." "The old is good."

The boys are loafing around town; the immoral "skunks" are still whittling dry-goods boxes and peddling bad stories; the neighbor on the next farm has a still in his woods and is ruining the youth with his home-made booze; the street carnival or county fair is getting worse each year; some automobile drivers are ignoring the law. Don't you think we need a new sheriff or constable, a new judge or justice of the peace? Perhaps so, but "election always comes when I am busy." Anyhow, the old officers suit me. "The old is good."

Being satisfied with the old is one of the most respectable forms of no-accountness. In class meeting at church we talk like angels; but when something needs to be done to clean up the community, we are prone to turn into clams. We wait for the coming of the Lord without preparing the way. We stand in line for the parade into heaven while some of our near neighbors are going to the devil. We are good, but good for nothing.

Law Enforcement

Jesus said, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." The Christian who takes his calling seriously has his fight cut out for him, for he must fight sin on every hand. When Roosevelt died, all Tammany Hall paid him tribute; not because its devotees loved him, but because he was dead and could not spoil their graft any longer. A man like this is usually called unorthodox by the respectable grafters, who do not want their reputations soiled. A minister who fights for law enforcement is warned not to mix up with "the world." We need more Christians who will spend half their time in the tunic of a nurse and half in the mail of a warrior.

If any think those who enforce the laws have not the task of a crusader, let them look at this letter written by a Negro pastor in Texas to the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church:

"Dear Sirs:

"We have a membership of more than five hundred who live in the Mexia oil field and own large tracts of land surrounded with oil wells, and the white people having promised to run us out and treat us like they did those Negroes in Tulsa, Oklahoma. We want to know, Can we get the church to handle our property for us? Can we grant the church the power of an attorney to act for us in time of such great danger. These are awful days for us poor, helpless Negroes in the South. The other day a member of my race was burned in Texas, about ten miles from me—burned by unmasked men, children, and women; and men jabbed sticks in his mouth, nose, and eyes. This act was done in the day; so if we are mobbed and run out, we want some one to see after our property.

"Signed, ————."

We must not only walk in "the paths of righteousness" but search through the forests until we discover where these paths lie. Wayne B. Wheeler, of the Anti-Saloon League, tells us how we may aid the enforcement of the prohibition amendment. He says:

"Help create public sentiment for law and order by talking it.

"Become acquainted with the officers of the law.

"Give information to officers as to violations, local, State, federal.

"Urge members of Congress, State Legislatures, and municipal legislative bodies to prevent the weakening of the present laws and encourage strengthening these measures.

"Give information to press about prohibition and its enforcement.

"Answer articles from wets.

"Urge pastors to help by speaking for law enforcement.

"Keep on friendly terms with officers as far as possible.

"Encourage discussion of the issue of law enforcement in young people's societies, schools, etc. Protest in a dignified manner to a judge or other officer who gives ridiculously low fines or fails in doing his duty and makes law enforcement a farce.

"Persons willing to serve as deputy sheriffs or constables are urged to do so.

"Speak your convictions courageously, but never in anger, for law and order whenever law enforcement is condemned in your presence."

Those of us who are talking about the barbarism of the Turk should remember that the lynchings in the United

States reached a total of 3,422 between the years of 1889 and 1921. Of these, 720 were white. The annual number decreased 54 per cent from 1889 to 1908, but the decrease since then has been only 7 per cent. The only States with clear records are Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Utah, and the District of Columbia. Principal R. R. Moton, of Tuskegee Institute, sends out the annual record of lynchings. In one year there were 72 instances in which officers of the law prevented lynchings; 64 of these were in Southern States. In 1921 there were 63 persons lynched, of whom 62 were in the South; 59 were Negroes, and 4 were whites. Among the cases of lynching there were 19 instances in which prisoners were taken from jail and 16 others in which they were taken from officers of the law before reaching the jail.

Imagine yourself, if you can, in the place of a county sheriff who refuses to deliver a man from jail to a mob to be lynched and then finds himself defeated at the next election.

"For they who, by whatever name,
Have dared to challenge wrong,
Who stoop to lift the burdened up
And help the weak be strong,—
These blaze again the shining paths
The lords of life have trod;
And where their valiant footsteps go,
There go the ways of God."

Reforms

An Oklahoma town council met one night to vote on buying the equipment for an electric-lighting plant. The hall was crowded with taxpayers. One member of the council, who had refused a bribe from the salesman, opposed the offer. Every other councilman spoke in favor of it and seemed personally much disappointed when the sale was not made, for evidently each had been offered the same rake-off. There are usually some in every such group who indignantly spurn a bribe and so save the day. An increasing number of men in public office place public trust above personal gain. Many church members nowadays are replacing philanthropy with civic service. In-

stead of giving poor people old clothes they are giving them a living wage. Instead of sending a missionary barrel they are paying their benevolences in full. Instead of supplying a tenant with baking powder and sour milk and other petty gifts they are helping him get enough money to buy a home of his own through the Federal Farm Loan Association.

The most encouraging sign of the church's present-day crusade against sin is the way we are making character building tax-supported. We are using part of our taxes for community playgrounds. We are building community social halls instead of jails. We are getting our boys and girls into daily vacation church schools instead of into juvenile courts. Our school boards are substituting medical examination in the schools for neighborhood epidemics. The farmers are testing their cows to help keep babies well. The church, in addition to nursing and healing the sick, is agitating for a community nurse, an efficient health board, good schools, and a healthy recreational program. Not only through the appeal for pity but through efficient civic officials can permanent reforms come.

Poverty is curable. County agents, agricultural colleges, and cooperative producing and marketing associations help do away with poverty. Sickness is preventable. County nurses, home-demonstration agents, county health officers, and sanitary inspectors protect health. Sin is curable. Proper recreation, regulated amusement places, schools with industrial education, churches with community halls, church schools with organized activities, are all character-forming institutions. In this way we "fight the good fight with all our might." In the crusade against sin let us sing,

> "Lead on, O King Eternal!
> The day of march has come,"

and then follow him.

Practicing Religion in Civic Activities

Everywhere we are finding an increasing number of Christian laymen who are meeting squarely their civic responsibilities. Look at the record of this New York

State farmer: Director, Wyoming County Agricultural Society; president, New York State Farm Bureau Federation for five years; trustee, Syracuse University; president, Wyoming County Farm Bureau; master, Wyoming County Grange; chaplain, New York State Grange; master, New York State Grange; vice-president, American Farm Bureau Federation; vice-president, Gainesville National Bank; president, Board of Education, Castile High School; delegate to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church; president, New York State Sunday School Association; and member of the federal food administration. In the same year he was voted upon for Master of the State Grange, there was a bitter school fight on in his State. A bill had been proposed in the Legislature to improve the rural schools. It was a very unpopular bill with the grangers, because they feared it would raise school taxes and also bring about consolidation of small district schools. Notwithstanding the unpopularity of the bill this man championed it throughout the State because he believed it was for the best interests of the rural boys and girls. When told that he would be defeated for the highest honor in the State that the grange could give him if he supported this bill he replied, "I would rather stand for a principle I believe to be right than to be elected Master of the State Grange."

Recently, while the cotton market in the South was suffering a bad collapse, more than eight thousand Texas farmers faithfully stuck to their pool contracts at great personal loss, because principle meant more to them than money. Likewise, many a dairy farmer in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York stayed in the Dairymen's League at a personal loss because of the principles involved. Putting principle above price and civic good above personal gain is one of the everyday uses for a virile Christianity.

In a small, sleepy village in New York State the only public institution was the one-teacher school, and the only public building was the old stone schoolhouse, built more than a hundred years ago. There was no church, no grange, no lodge, no community pride, no recent public improvement. Two young women became responsible for

a Sunday school in the old schoolhouse. Another woman promoted the building of a community hall. Because of these activities there came once more into this neighborhood idealism and civic responsibility.

No one knows when his opportunity will come to give his testimony in the cause of civic righteousness. A teacher of a men's Bible class on Long Island was elected to the State senate. The dry forces of the State looked to him to vote for law enforcement instead of, in this case, standing with his party.

In a pioneer Oklahoma community a small group of early settlers were trying to get a church started. There came to one of these meetings two young men who endeavored to "start some excitement" by "breaking up the meeting." I was always proud of my father that night, because he dared go down to the constable and swear out a warrant for the arrest of the two offenders. This, however, was the same type of spirit he showed when he took the initiative in starting that little Methodist church. Civic righteousness is the work-day clothes of Sunday religion.

Churches everywhere are giving to the community in country and in city, State and nation, an increasing number of men and women who look upon their civic responsibility as the week-day expression of their Sunday profession.

Questions for Discussion

1. Can you give any explanation for the teacher of the men's Bible class who voted against law enforcement in order to keep with his party?

2. Discuss the man who agrees with a prohibition sermon on Sunday morning and who agrees with the first man Monday morning who finds fault with the Volstead Act.

3. Which one of our recent presidents has gone down in history as a champion of civic righteousness?

4. What does an incident like the Tulsa race riot indicate relative to the sense of civic responsibility the citizens of that place had at that time?

5. A minister resigned from his church, because the Ladies' Aid Society held a bazaar in the basement of his

church building. Across the street from this same minister was a gambling hole he had left unmolested all the year. What type of religion did he have? Compare him with Amos or Micah.

6. A church in a small village took a definite stand against lawbreaking. The local paper came out with a long editorial advising the church to "stick to religion" and "stay out of politics." What should the church do next?

CHAPTER IX

OUR TOWN

JESUS was born in a Judæan village, lived in a small town in Galilee, and during all his life loved village people. Even when he went up to the city to the feasts he sought those closer friendships found most easily in a little village like Bethany.

He knew well the needs of these scattered villages. Matthew says, "He was moved with compassion for them."

In our country there are twelve thousand of these scattered villages, and twelve million people enjoy the close ties of friendship and the petty happenings that such villages furnish. These twelve million Americans know their neighbors better than anyone else does. They are conscious, too, of the hospitality, the kindliness, and the genuineness, as well as the limitations, of village life.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Matt. 9. 35-38.

35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. 36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. 37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. 38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.

Luke 8. 1-3.

1 And it came to pass soon afterwards, that he went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good tidings of the kingdom of God, and with him the twelve, 2 and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary that was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna the wife of Chuzas Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who ministered unto them of their substance.

We are apt to condemn the small village, tell of its faults, make fun of it. Jesus went about among the villages of Galilee "bringing good tidings."

What if the "kingdom of God" should come to our villages? What differences would it make? Should we still have loafers around the stores? Would the neighbors gossip as much? Would the alleys be any cleaner? Would the weeds still grow along the sidewalks? Would the clerks still need to work their fifteen hours a day? Would law-breakers still hide in the back streets and alleys? How would it affect our town if the kingdom of God came to it?

Streets and Sidewalks

A village, like a person, can have pride, ambition, and a conscience. Likewise, it can be conservative, discouraged, careless of appearances, and heedless of improvements.

"How far is it to Oakland?" a stranger asked.

"Two miles," came the reply. "You'll know when you get there by the bad roads."

Not a very good advertisement for a town! One block of bad streets hurts a town's reputation more than any commercial club can help it.

A Catholic priest was sent to a small Wisconsin village where no improvements had been made in more than a score of years. He built a sidewalk in front of the church yard and on toward the center of town. This appealed to the pride of his neighbors. One by one they followed his example and built sidewalks too. This may seem like a small improvement but it was enough to awaken village pride, and other good things followed. Whatever priest or layman, agent or institution can awaken the pride of a small village and make it want to improve itself, helps the coming of the kingdom of God in that place. Improvement is contagious. A new cement sidewalk in a discouraged village paves the way for other improvements.

An Open Town

When the town officials allow people to do just as they please, we say "the town is wide open." Bootlegging and moonshining flourished in a certain Oklahoma town.

Some of the citizens complained to the town officials. But nothing was done about it. Automobiles were seen traveling forty miles an hour through the streets. Again the officials received complaints from the citizens but did nothing. Sunday closing laws were not enforced. The place soon became known as "an open town." Finally its lawlessness culminated in a big race riot in which thirty blocks of homes were burned and many lives were lost. Two million dollars' worth of property was destroyed. Not only was there a loss of property, but the town suffered a seared conscience and a blighted soul.

It will take the kingdom of God a long time to come to a town whose officials do not enforce the law. In fact, the law is simply the best judgment of the people, written down on statute books. It is what the best people want. It is the measure of improvement which the town has made.

Good Christians will support officials who enforce the law. In fact, the best Christians will run for office and take a more active part in law enforcement. A man is a poor excuse for a Christian who will not vote on election day but will complain about "the politicians" the rest of the year. The kingdom of God does not come to a town out of the clouds, but, rather, out of the thoughtful self-denial and the earnest effort which we as Christians practice each day.

Cooperation Among Merchants

When the "good tidings of the kingdom of God" really reach our town the merchants will be getting along well with each other. They will keep their word. When they agree on certain closing hours, no one will need to doubt them. Like good neighbors, they will accommodate each other. They will not be like that furniture dealer in a small town who paid regular visits to his competitor and while pretending to be making a friendly call would find out the prices on his neighbor's goods so that he could go back and mark his goods a trifle lower. This man was a "professing" Christian but not good at "practicing."

Merchants, like others, must make a fair profit. "Fair-price fixing" among merchants is a sign of friendly cooperation. Of course, it must be fair to the buyer, too.

Holidays for Clerks

The Christmas spirit has been responsible for the "Shop early" slogan. The "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people" which the angels announced, fills our hearts around Christmas time, so that we at least make resolutions to shop early and lighten the burden of the clerks. As the spirit of good will fills our hearts more and more we will think about these same clerks after Christmas is over. We will not require them to work seven days a week. We will arrange our business so that they can have a half holiday each week. We will allow them early closing hours. We will be considerate of others.

Town and Country Cooperation

When the kingdom of God comes to our town the farmers near town will know it. The suspicion that so often arises between the town and the country will be broken down. The families of farmers and merchants will visit back and forth. They will realize that their prosperity depends on each other. They will also unite in community developments, Chautauquas, agricultural fairs, better schools, and churches.

The attitude among the church people in some villages has been to pray for the farmers on Sunday because they don't come to church and to prey on them the remainder of the week. But many villages are changing their idea of exploiting the open country to one of friendly cooperation. A small New York village recently had a banquet and program which was given jointly by the farmers and merchants. Over six hundred farmers attended this meeting. It was an encouraging evidence of friendly cooperation and good will. A large town church uses its assistant pastor to do extension work among country churches. He has resuscitated two abandoned churches and is bringing the gospel to five needy communities. His work is an excellent example of unselfish service on the part of the town church which supports him.

Our Stores

The farmer too will do his part toward a greater coopera-

tive spirit. Some farmers wear out ten mail-order catalogs to one Bible. They are afraid their local merchant is beating them, so they spend their leisure time looking over catalogs of mail-order houses. Cooperation, instead of suspicion, between farmers and merchants will come with the coming of the kingdom of good will. We honor God by the way we do our daily work. After Jesus said, "I must be about my Father's business," he worked eighteen years at the carpenter's trade. He was doing God's will when he was making plow beams, as he was when he was dying on the cross. A merchant honors God by the way he does his daily work, treats his customers, manages his store. Is his store neat and clean? Does he take pride in keeping his wares up-to-date? Are the biggest potatoes to be found through the basket as well as on the top? Are his goods as represented?

The devil's best advertising station is a small store in a small town with a group of small men sitting around the store telling questionable stories. Women sometimes complain that they are embarrassed trading at such stores.

If there are more tobacco advertisements on the outside of a store than all other signs, that merchant is doing a poor job of honoring God in his daily life.

Great People in Small Villages

If there are five grain elevators in a town where there should be only three, or three churches in a town where there should be only two, or two banks in a town where there should be only one, there is usually a lot of argument as to which is the greatest. Jesus defined greatness for us in no uncertain language. When his own disciples got into one of those petty arguments, Jesus said, "Whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister." The man who will be the greatest in the town, then, will be the one who best serves his fellow men. He will try to get an electric lighting plant and a water system installed. He will not only vote in favor of bonds for new streets and sidewalks but will keep his own streets and sidewalks in repair. He will not hinder the telephone service by monopolizing a party line or "listening in"

when others are talking. He will find ways to serve his farm customers during the busy season by sending goods out by mail. He will accept his share of town offices. He will help get good clean votes out to the polls on election day. No children will be deprived of health or education while working in his factory or store. He may be able to say as Jesus said, "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth."

We often hear of doctors who go away to the city and achieve greatness. "They are known all over such and such a city" we hear. In Minnesota are two brothers who have tried to do their best even though they have lived in a small town, and their reputation reaches not only across one city but is nation-wide. The sick of a continent have made a pathway to their door.

At a gathering of ministers at the University of Wisconsin one man was present from a small village church who gave the impression of being the least among that gathering. But it was later learned that fifty-seven other clergymen had entered the ministry from the small village churches which he had faithfully served.

A banker in a small village was offered a place in a large bank of a large city, but he preferred living among neighbors and friends. People all over the county call him by his first name. They come to him not only when they have business to transact but also when they are in trouble. It has been said of him that no funeral procession has ever gone out of the small town where he lives but that his car has carried either the mourners or the pall bearers. One of the questions he often hears is, "Well, Roy, how many widows have you by this time?" for it seems that he cares for the business of most of the widows in the county. He is always on hand in case of sickness, and, when a home burns or any misfortune befalls a neighbor, he seems to be the first one to reach the house. No one remembers a Chautauqua or fair that he did not serve on the committee. And although he may not have as many customers as if he had gone to the city bank, he has many more friends, real and genuine friends, who look to him in gratitude and love.

Four women in a small quarrelsome village started in

to change village jealousies into community pride. In their little hamlet small things appeared large because there was nothing big to be seen or heard. So they planned a big community program. First they organized all the women they could get to join them into a Home Bureau. Next they arranged for the use of an abandoned store building for a community hall. A new play ground with play equipment at the school was next. Then a demonstration in beautification was planned. Gradually in their village, as a result of these community efforts, hatreds changed to faith, discouragement to hope, selfishness to service, and petty gossip to general good will.

A resident describing a certain village said, "Everybody and everything is here pulling against everyone else." One man remarked, "This place reminds me of a cross-cut saw, because people are always pulling in opposite directions." The Masons and Odd Fellows were competitors. The Ku Klux Klan was stirring up religious prejudice and calling it one hundred per cent Americanism. The "poolers" and "non-poolers" were much in evidence, and so the lines of division continued, the "wets" and the "drys," the Democrats and Republicans, the Protestants and Catholics, the liberals and the fundamentalists. Finally, the new Methodist pastor organized a big unified school of week-day religious instruction, into which came the children from all types of homes. Through serving their boys and girls, the parents were quickly moved to forget their factions and unite in a village-wide social program under the direction of a "community council" in which each organization had representation.

Two families in another community caught the vision of improving their village. They talked improvements themselves and brought in "outside speakers." The spirit finally became contagious, until now they have: (1) a new school building, (2) a well-equipped school play ground, (3) an up-to-date library, (4) two modern churches with separate rooms for all the departments in the Sunday school, (5) a parish house used for all types of community meetings, (6) an auditorium for lectures and concerts, (7) a visiting nurse and health clinics, (8) committees on agricultural and home improvement.

Work That Counts

Jesus once said, "My Father worketh even until now and I work." And as he went about his work among the villages of Palestine—teaching, healing, preaching—he was impressed with the need of more workers. "The harvest truly is plenteous," he said, "but the laborers are few."

Carrying on his work among the twelve thousand villages in our own land is a task which our Lord offers to us.

Oh, Master, let me walk with thee,
In lowly paths of service free.

We can be "laborers in his vineyard" in this our own village. First, let us see its possibilities. We must believe in our town before we can do much for it. Who would have thought the little town of Concord, Massachusetts, would produce more writers of national fame than New York or Chicago or San Francisco? Then we can serve our Lord in our daily business relationships. We can be honest and straightforward with our neighbors. Honesty is soon discovered and valued in a small town. The way we operate our stores is known to all. Our religion is tested when the clothesline breaks or the neighbor's chickens get into our garden. Living in a small town calls for that compassionate spirit of our Lord, that "chemistry of the soul" which Jesus had, which sees in all about us a chance to love and serve our fellow men.

Questions for Discussion

1. Does our town have adequate fire protection? An efficient lighting plant? A good water system?
2. Have there been any traffic accidents on our streets?
3. Are we proud of our sidewalks?
4. Is there a friendly feeling between our farmers and merchants?
5. Are we considerate of the business interests of others by allowing early closing hours for clerks?
6. Does Christianity affect our daily business in such a way that our competitors will trust us?
7. Are our stores free from loafers? Do we advertise for the devil by the crowd that hangs around our stores?

8. Are we honoring God by seeing that the law is enforced in our town? Is it free from bootleggers?

9. Are people kind and neighborly with one another or is there considerable gossip?

10. Do neighbors show the Christian spirit by helping each other in times of sickness or need?

11. Is our town getting better? Is the kingdom of God coming any nearer to our village?

CHAPTER X

OUR SCHOOLS

The Church's Interest in Schools

Within twenty years after the Pilgrims landed in America, a law was enacted making it the duty of the State to see that every child received an education. As far back as 1642 a parent could be fined who neglected the education of his children. The church early realized that ignorance and sin went hand in hand. From the very beginning schools were established and supported as a religious duty. The church early helped in the building of colleges in order to train Christian leaders. In most pioneer communities the same building was used for school and church.

Has this early interest of the church in our schools lessened? To-day we find many active church members who have never attended a school meeting in their lives. Occasionally we find ministers who do not visit the schools at all. At some annual school elections in the country less than half a dozen votes are cast.

In a certain village where sixteen thousand dollars was spent annually on the schools only twenty-one people attended the annual school meeting one year. Only one parent out of fifty came to the meeting. In some communities with a hundred church members it is hard to get three men who are willing to serve as school officials. We are increasing our taxes to care for criminals faster than for schoolchildren. We complain about the expense of our schools. One retired farmer, when asked about the improvement of the schools, replied, "I'm in favor of any kind of school improvement—if it does not cost anything." Sometimes we have been guilty of voting for school trustees because they have promised to keep school taxes down. In our rural schools we spend twenty-four dollars a year on the education of a boy or girl; to care for a criminal for trial and detention in prison we spend thirteen hundred

dollars a year. Ignorance and sin are much more expensive than education and righteousness.

"What would Jesus have us do about this?" we ask. We know, of course, his attitude toward children; for when he saw the disciples rebuking the mothers for bothering him with their children, "he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God." We also know that "Teacher" was the most common title given to our Lord. He was interested in children and before all else he was a Teacher.

We may well ask if we have been neglecting our schools when in a progressive State like New York many schoolhouses are now being used which are more than a hundred years old. A recent survey of the schools of the State shows that more than half the buildings are over fifty years of age. Is it not time for a change? Warren H. Wilson says, "Nothing short of religious devotion will organize an adequate educational system for the whole people."

Scripture Lesson

Hos. 4. 6.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children.

John 5. 2-9.

2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep *gate* a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered. 5 And a certain man was there, who had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity. 6 When Jesus saw him lying, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wouldest thou be made whole? 7 The sick man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8 Jesus saith unto him, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9 And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.

Jesus' Method of Improvement

The infirm man began to excuse himself and to put the blame on someone else. Nobody helped him, he claimed.

If anyone did offer to help, either he wasn't ready, or the pool wasn't. Thirty-eight years is a long time to wait on someone else. Jesus told him to get up, to stand on his own feet. Whatever else Jesus may have done for him, he got him to help himself.

We hear people say nowadays: "I never had a chance to go to school when I was young." "My mother was sick, and I wasn't able to finish." "The schools here were so poor our children didn't do well." "We only had six months of school, and it was the teacher's first term." "Poor fellow—he was not so bad; just ignorant." But who is responsible for these things?

Handicaps of Rural Boys and Girls

Miss Mabel Carney, head of the Department of Rural Education of Columbia University, says that our eleven million rural children "are lamentably handicapped and neglected"; that "illiteracy is twice as bad in rural areas as in urban districts." She says further that country children have only seven months of school a year, on an average, to nine months for city children and are kept at home to work or are absent for other reasons more than one fourth of the school term. Farmers spend twenty-four dollars per capita each year on the education of their boys or girls, while the cities spend forty dollars per capita. One half the teachers in country schools have never completed a four-year high-school course. Only one teacher out of fifty in country schools is a normal-school graduate. We would hardly let a doctor without a medical education care for our children when sick: why should we let untrained people care for our children's minds? Isn't it about time we were improving our own schools ourselves?

School Improvements

As a rule a community is more interested in its children than in anything else. Most taxpayers want to improve the schools. One unmarried woman worked against school improvement because, as she said, "I have two farms and no children." She was thinking more about her taxes than about other people's children. As a rule,

though, people will help improve the schools if they know how to do it.

In one community a mass meeting was being held to discuss the equipping of a playground on the school yard. One woman objected thus: "I'm afraid the big boys will push the little ones out of the swings and break their arms." When it was explained to her that the play apparatus for small children would be separated from the rest, she was enthusiastic in favor of the plan.

Much of the opposition to the consolidation of one-district schools is due to the fear of losing from the community one of the best-loved institutions. As one parent said: "Our school is the only thing we have left. They have taken everything else away from us. They took our post office when the rural delivery came. With it the store left. The blacksmith shop closed up when the automobiles came. The State has taken everything but our school, and we want to keep it." But this is an unreasonable attitude if through consolidation children can be provided with better schools.

Parent-Teacher Associations

New interest is being created in schools by parent-teacher associations, sometimes called home-and-school leagues. They are bringing the parents and the teachers closer together. Home work and home projects are more successful. The parents can talk to the pupils about school life more intelligently and sympathetically. Some associations provide playground equipment for the schools, hot lunches, lectures, or motion-picture programs. One valuable effect of the work of some of these associations has been to get at least one mother elected on the school board. She is put into office to improve the schools, to save the child rather than to save taxes.

The School-Tax Levy

Everyone says taxes are getting too high, and no one disputes it; but before we say that again let us discriminate between school taxes and others. We spend as much on crime in the United States as we do on our public schools below high school. Let just one boy grow up in ignorance

and become a lawbreaker, and he will cost the community as much in taxes each year as we spend on a school for fifty pupils—thirteen hundred dollars a year for a criminal and twenty-four dollars a year for a schoolboy. It would be money well spent to keep him from becoming a criminal. We should save taxes by spending more on the schools.

Elmira, New York, employs teachers of play and games for the schools. These "play teachers" supervise games, train a brass band of seventy-five pieces, and put on concerts and dramatic events. They have built a playground out of a rubbish dump in the city and fitted up a camping ground on an island in the river near by. All this costs the city in taxes nine cents for each boy or girl. If a boy or girl who has been neglected gets into trouble and is sent to a correctional institution, the cost to the city for this one juvenile delinquent is four hundred and thirty-nine dollars. Nine cents per pupil for a teacher of play and more than four hundred dollars for a boy who has been neglected! Play is cheaper than neglect; education costs less than ignorance; right living is inexpensive compared with crime, vice, and sin.

Before we vote against an increased school tax again let us cut down our expenditures on luxuries. According to government statistics in 1920 the women in this country spent enough money on toilet preparations, cosmetics, and lipsticks to pay the whole cost of the public schools of the nation. And the men need not feel so self-sacrificing, for they spent twice as much on tobacco as our schools cost.

A rural community in a Northwestern State decided it wanted a better grade of horses. The farmers sent a man to Chicago to buy a pure-bred colt, paying four thousand dollars for him. The barn they built for him cost more than their schoolhouse, and they paid the man who cared for their horse twice as much salary as they paid their school-teacher. They have some fine colts in the community now; unfortunately two of their young men are in State penitentiaries. Neglected schools mean crowded penitentiaries.

In a Wisconsin institution for juvenile delinquents it was found that out of 252 of these young criminals only seven had ever read a good book. The church has the job

of fighting sin. Doesn't this Wisconsin institution show that the church as a whole and every Christian as an individual should be more interested in good schools?

One of the best expenditures of our benevolent boards is for mission schools. We find that backward communities and handicapped peoples receive their most permanent help through these institutions. We give the Lord's money for their support. We also give a part of our tithes to the support of church colleges. Then why should Christian men and women not be interested in the schools for our own boys and girls in our home communities? School taxes should be increased through the influence of church folk in the same spirit in which we support mission schools.

Real Patriotism

A certain school board insists that the United States flag be displayed on each school day and then hires the cheapest teacher available. This raises the question as to what real patriotism is. Is it talking about our glorious past or is it making our country better for the future? We all recall the many drives we helped make for our home neighborhoods during the World War. Our patriotism was such that we always subscribed more than our quota. But a country schoolhouse costs less than a cannon, a college less than a battleship. Let's "go over the top" in school taxes. We read each day how "wealthy America should help the war-stricken world"; yet seven other countries have a higher percentage of literacy than the United States. Let us levy sufficient school taxes to provide efficient teachers, buildings, and equipment for our own boys and girls.

School Pride

Blackwell, Oklahoma, is one of the many towns whose every citizen is proud of its schools. The old resident and the newcomer, the banker and the bricklayer, are all ready to tell you how much they think of their public schools. Each summer before high school begins, the men of the town go out into the surrounding country searching for students. They arrange a banquet every year for all of the boys who have just completed the neighboring rural

schools. These men go out in their cars and bring the boys in to this banquet. Here they are encouraged to enroll in the high school. They are told of its vocational work and its athletics and are shown its spirit. Successful farmers and others emphasize the value to those students of completing a high-school course. Employment to help pay their expenses is found for them if necessary. This school is known throughout the State for its athletic accomplishments. Its principal is called to the colleges and universities in the State to referee games. Riding across the country, a stranger can locate the rural schools where the graduates of this high school are teaching. The buildings are painted and in good repair. They have equipment for instruction in cooking, sewing, manual training, or agriculture, and they usually have ample outdoor play equipment—swings, seesaws, sand boxes, volleyball and tennis courts, and baseball diamonds.

In contrast with this school a township in West Virginia comes to mind. The president of the school board, a local physician, is giving of his time unstintedly to the improvement of the schools; but no one seems to be helping him. He said, "I have been in a good many difficult situations and have tackled a good many hard jobs in my life, but this school job is the most difficult one." Out of a possible one hundred points the twenty schools in this township scored only fifty-six. Buildings were out of date. Light came in from both sides instead of just from the left or from the left and rear. The stoves were not jacketed. Floors were not oiled. There were no libraries in the schools. Only a few had a piano or organ or victrola. The toilets were unsanitary. The blackboards were antiquated. The only interest the church people seemed to take in the schools was to get the free use of the building for revival meetings. The county superintendent of schools was defeated in the last election because he advocated an increased school tax. The president of the school board was doing his best to improve the schools, but the people were not helping him. They lacked a Christian attitude toward their schools. The adult class in the Sunday school could have created an entirely different attitude toward education. As the situation is now, the boys are

leaving school and becoming village loafers. The poor schools in this West Virginia township are the natural result of a lack of interest among the citizens in its school. The Oklahoma school owes its success to the pride the parents take in it.

Week-Day Religious Education

The Interchurch Survey showed us that 69.3 per cent of all our boys and girls and young people under twenty-five years of age are not in any Sunday school. We have compulsory attendance at the public school, but two out of three of our children are not having the all-around development which Jesus had in his Nazareth community. When he went back to his home in Nazareth we read that he "advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

The churches and schools cooperatively are trying to supply this needed religious instruction. Some of these week-day schools of religious education have been conducted by individual churches, though usually, in villages, two or more churches unite in this project. The public schools may close say at two-thirty Wednesday, and the pupils go to their respective churches or to one neighboring church for regular religious instruction. Sometimes the public-school teachers are employed by the churches to have charge of the religious education. Sometimes arrangements are made for the classes to be held in the schoolhouse. More than five thousand such schools have already been arranged by the church and school authorities cooperatively, and the movement is growing.

We pray daily: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." As we get up from our knees and start out to help bring in this kingdom for which we pray, as a part of the improvement of our church we must devote ourselves also to the improvement of our schools.

Questions for Discussion

1. Is our home school getting better or worse?

2. If you visited a community and found the people using automobiles of a 1900 model, the women wearing dresses that were in style in 1850, and the children going

to a school built in 1860, according to the best knowledge of that day, what conclusions would you come to about the place? In the older settled States more than half the schoolhouses now in use were built before 1875.

3. In a certain rural community in Idaho the teacher had great difficulty in finding a family with whom she could board. Does this indicate anything regarding the people's interest in their schools?

4. At a school election in a rural community in New York, as no one present would accept the office of school trustee, the voters elected a man who was not present. To get even with them he spent all the money available on school improvements. Would you have voted for his reelection?

5. Our best school authorities claim that our small district schools should be consolidated. How can this be accomplished in this community?

6. If you had been the man at the Bethesda pool, what would you have done? If you found your community had an impotent church or school, what would you suggest be done about it?

7. Which renders the greater service to his country—a soldier or a schoolteacher? Why?

CHAPTER XI

CHURCHES WORKING TOGETHER

Most of our American colonies were settled by people who came here because of religious persecution in Europe. The Puritans settled Massachusetts. The Dutch Reformed founded New York and a part of New Jersey. The Roman Catholics started Maryland, naming the State after the French Catholic princess Maria. Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and Quakers settled North Carolina, and Baptists Rhode Island. Swedish Lutherans built up Delaware, and all know that the Quakers founded Pennsylvania. These Friends were very liberal, however, and soon German Lutherans and German Reformed colonists settled in parts of Pennsylvania. The Church of England controlled Virginia and was found in other colonies as well. These early settlers were intensely loyal to their respective creeds, owing to the fact that most of them had been persecuted in Europe for believing as they did.

As groups from these various colonies settled the Middle Western States, their different forms of worship were brought into closer contact and often into conflict. The Episcopalians, for example, at first had no denominational trouble in Virginia, for there were no other sects there. Only Episcopalians were allowed by law to teach or preach in the State. But where some of these families or their descendants in some Illinois town found themselves living alongside of Lutherans or "Come-Outers," there was opportunity for misunderstandings. For example, a group of Presbyterians from Pennsylvania would migrate to Ohio and build a Presbyterian church. As they sold their farms, the newcomers brought denominational problems. Mr. Methodist, who bought Mr. Presbyterian's farm, instead of joining his church, thought loyalty to his denomination required that he build a Methodist church there in the same community where there was a good church. Mrs. Baptist, who moved in across the road, could become

neither a Methodist nor a Presbyterian. Why? Simply because she was a Baptist. Soon her Baptist friends rallied around her, and a third church was built where one would have been sufficient; so to-day we have churches built sometimes only a mile apart or even across the road from one another. The average small villages of six or seven hundred people in the Middle West have three churches where one would be better. As one goes farther west, the condition is worse, partly because the population is more diverse, and partly because the Boards of Home Missions have rendered greater assistance in building new churches in the West. In a recent study of twenty-five counties made by Morse and Brunner they found that every fifth church in these counties receives home-mission aid, and that only thirty-four out of the 211 aided churches are entirely free from competition. Through no fault of the present membership many churches find themselves competing with another denomination, with the resulting unfriendly rivalry.

John was on the isle of Patmos in the Spirit on the Lord's day, looking for better things, when he wrote the following verses:

Scripture Lesson

Rev. 21. 1-5, 10, 13, 22-27.

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God: 4 and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. 5 And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true.

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

13 On the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the

Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. 23 And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof *is* the Lamb. 24 And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. 25 And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): 26 and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 27 and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life.

A New Heaven and a New Earth

In this new heaven and new earth all can enter excepting those who "maketh an abomination and a lie." Many of the unkind things we have said about the other denominations in our community have been untrue. All those whose names are "written in the Lamb's book of life" can enter. Many gates open into this new heaven and new earth. The Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Reformed may perhaps enter through the three gates on the east. The three south gates may be used by the Methodists, Baptists, and Disciples. Perhaps the west gates may be for the United Brethren, Salvation Army, and Pentecostal Holiness. Lutherans, Quakers, and Catholics may be assigned to the three gates on the north side of the holy city. But, however they come, there will be no difficulties as to which church they shall attend; for in the new heaven and new earth John said, "I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof." And we who have spent so much of our time building denominational fences will be surprised to find that in the new heaven and the new earth "the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut."

Denominational Jealousies

Paul was taught to persecute the Christians. Luther, founder of Protestantism, wrote a book entitled *That the Koran of Mohammed Is Brutish and Hoggish;* another *About the Coarse Lies in the Koran.* One of Luther's hymns begins:

> "Lord, shield us with thy word and hope,
> And smite the Moslem and the Pope."

Many local churches have been born in our beloved rural America because of sectarian jealousy or denominational pride.

The illustrations used here come from a first-hand study by the writer of 232 town and country churches in the Middle West. Forty-one different denominations are represented in this group of 232 churches. Most of the members admitted they longed for "church unity," but until they get it they are not showing, in at least half of the communities, a very neighborly spirit of cooperation.

Here is a village of seven hundred people and three churches. The Methodists are accused of proselyting. The United Brethren are being censored for building a church in the village when another church is not needed. Both groups have some grievance against the Disciples.

A representative of the Methodist Church, in telling of the success of his denomination, said, "We have taken in one hundred and thirteen members in the three churches on our charge this year, and thirty-five of this number have come from other denominations." There is not much Christian neighborliness in rejoicing over the fact of getting thirty-five persons to quit their church and join yours. This representative concluded his statement with the proud assertion: "I tell you, my denomination is growing in these parts!" Sometimes denominations can grow, and the kingdom of heaven suffer thereby.

In discussing the unfriendly feeling toward the other churches a member of the Disciples Church made the remark: "If that Methodist church were on fire, and I should pass by, and a bucket of water were standing near, I'd kick it over and go on."

A representative of each of the three churches was asked the same question regarding the feeling between the three churches. Each blamed the bad feeling on the other church.

"No, we are not very friendly," said the Disciples' representative. "You see, those United Brethren are to blame. They should never have built here."

The United Brethren pastor was asked, "How do the three churches get along?" "Not very well," he replied; "the Methodists held their revival longer than they agreed to."

The Methodists also admitted that things were going badly and said: "The Disciples are really the cause of the trouble. They seem to cause trouble in so many places."

The spirit in this village shows how important it is for denominations to make a greater effort to practice a neighborly spirit. Jesus prayed thus: "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us; that the world may believe that thou didst send me."

A Baptist minister in one community preached to members of another denomination and then refused to take communion with them. One man does not take the Holy Communion with his wife, because she belongs to a different church.

Debates and arguments between churches must be eliminated if we are to show the proper spirit of neighborliness. We must think better of our neighbors than we do of our denominational pride. Our neighbors' needs are more important than our ancestors' creeds. If we think more of service than of sects we will follow the Master's example. Notice how the spirit of debate had permeated this church: The clerk was asked about the standing of a certain member. "Yes, he's a good member," was the reply; "he's one of the best fighters we've got."

A million farmers in the United States move every year. They send their children to the new school, pay their taxes in the new community, but often refuse to join or even attend the new church. Statements are often heard like this: "No, sir, I am going to live and die just as I am. I'm a Baptist and couldn't be anything else." "I was born and raised a Methodist and I'm going to die one; so I want you to let me alone." "My grandfather was an Episcopal clergyman; and although he's dead now, I do not feel at home in other churches." The trouble with these people is that they have plenty of loyalty, but it is for the wrong thing. To change this we must think of giving Christian service instead of keeping our organizations intact. There are one hundred and fifty-six sects in the United States, and they all need the leveling-down process of Christian neighborliness.

Old church buildings often cause trouble even within the same denomination. With the automobile and improved roads neighborhoods are much larger than they were. This means that many churches should be united. When two Methodist congregations united in this way, three families refused to leave the old building. It was to them a local shrine regarded with a loyalty similar to that felt by the Canaanites for the "high places" which caused the prophets in the Old Testament so much trouble.

A United Brethren congregation was divided because some of the members preferred the old log structure to the new building. They clung to their old building as the Samaritans clung to Mount Gerizim.

Some people think of the church as they do a Pullman sleeping car, with its polite porter on hand to make up the beds and carry the baggage. No, a church is a battle front, facing sin, vice, selfishness, ignorance, and a lost world.

In one United Brethren church the Sunday school discontinued using union literature, adopting in its stead the regular United Brethren lessons. Most of the members of other denominations in this Sunday school withdrew. It is to be hoped that these "Pullman church members" will discover that the material in both lessons comes from the same Bible.

In many small villages the churches feel they are doing well if they can leave each other alone; but when revival meetings are held, the competition for new converts and the jealousy over the success of another church start trouble.

A young man was converted in one of the churches of his village and planned to join that church because, as he explained to his parents, "My crowd are all going to join that church." His parents, who belonged to another church, said he must join their church if he joined any. Consequently, he joined none and is now spoken of as "the tough of the town." This is the pathetic side of this unneighborly sectarianism.

That young man who refused to join the Disciples Church of his parents is one of many being lost because of sectarianism. Out of ninety-one churches in one county twenty-five had no young men on their rolls under twenty-

one years of age. In another county, with eighty-two churches, twenty-one had no young men among their membership. Out of one hundred and seventy-three churches one out of every four lost their young men largely because of their petty sectarian program.

A Way Out

We should prefer to have someone tell us how to get well rather than recount our symptoms. The pastor of the church, more than anyone else, will be able to change the attitude of envy and jealousy for the other church in the community to neighborliness and cooperation.

The church members can help by making financial arrangements for their pastor to attend all kinds of interdenominational conferences, such as county and State Sunday-school conventions, meetings of the county ministerial association, recreational and educational gatherings, short courses at the college of agriculture, and summer schools conducted by denominational boards of home missions. In the Methodist Episcopal Church, for example, a thousand pastors each year from town and country churches have been attending the summer schools conducted by the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension. In these schools the emphasis in church work is put on service to the local community instead of on denominational differences. Teachers have their county teachers' associations, and pastors have county ministerial associations; but preachers' salaries do not provide for the expense of attending these extra meetings. In the two hundred and thirty-two churches mentioned above only thirteen per cent of the pastors—one in eight—belong to county ministerial associations. Getting away to interdenominational meetings broadens one's vision.

Community Service

In removing sectarianism the most important change to be made is to put the emphasis on community needs instead of on denominational creeds. Creeds are of course necessary but they are the religious undergarments and should not be worn on the outside, like a coat, all the time. Or, to change the figure, our denominational differ-

ences should be placed under the altar, where we pray, and not at the doorstep, where people enter our church, and where outsiders can make remarks.

In an Oklahoma village were three small competing churches. The pastor of one of these organized Boy and Girl Scouts and built a hut with them for their meetings. He also gave much attention to the week-day activities of his church-school classes. Finally, representatives of the other two churches in the village came to him and said that since he was caring for their young people and their boys and girls they would give up their churches and unite with him in building just one church in the place. By their united efforts they have now completed a thirty thousand dollar structure, containing a sanctuary, a social hall, library, mothers' room, kindergarten, and rooms for the departments in the Sunday school. His service to the whole community was the uniting force.

The churches in a small town in Oregon decided their boys and girls needed a daily vacation church school. All the children of elementary grades were cared for by one denomination, another took the juniors, and the third the intermediates.

A Methodist Church in southern Ohio decided to hold a big rural-life institute. Representatives of the State College of Agriculture and of the United States Bureau of Education were among the speakers. "Modern Methods in the Sunday School," "Apple Raising," "Recreation," and "Roads" were included among the topics for discussion. The entire community was invited. The people came. This church was not thinking of Methodist roads or Methodist apples or Methodist schools but was trying to make the whole community better.

A Presbyterian church in Tennessee improved a bad road. They did not stop their grading when they were in front of a farm owned by a Baptist or a Holy Roller. They were rendering a service to the entire community. These churches were thinking of the needs of their communities, and not of their denominational pride or advantage. We get together not by telling how as different denominations we love one another but by doing something together. Community-wide gatherings will soon remove sectarianism.

Each winter a group of churches in a New Jersey village conducts a school of methods for their church-school teachers. By the union of all denominations in this way they improve the quality of their meeting and also give the church leaders a chance for cooperation. This type of cooperation removes misunderstandings. Two churches in a small New York village hold union services every Sunday evening. This arrangement gives each pastor two Sundays each month for extension work, thus ministering to small neglected neighborhoods in their vicinity.

Church Consolidation

These are days of consolidated schools, farm bureaus, the Red Cross, parent-teacher associations, and boys' and girls' clubs. The churches must come closer together in a larger program. The one-room school is changing to the centralized school. The old toll road becomes the State highway. The crossroads store gives place to the village department store. The country blacksmith shop becomes a garage. Likewise, we are facing the movement for the consolidation of churches.

When two or more churches in one community turn their attention to serving their neighborhood more than to serving their denomination they often discover that a consolidation of the churches would help to build up the kingdom of God there. Better equipment and better trained teachers could be provided for the young. A new church with rooms for social activities and church-school classes could be built. The pastor's salary could be doubled. He could spend all of his time with the one congregation and, by living with his people, could put on a community program. But how is this consolidation of churches to be effected?

Union Churches

Organizing a union church has been one method. The laymen usually are responsible for this movement. They get tired of the sectarian troubles. Or perhaps their churches are so small that each denomination finds the pastoral support too much of a burden. They throw off all denominational connections, employ a pastor from some outside denomination, and usually begin what promises

to be a hopeful career. But the plan usually fails. When their pastor leaves, they have no denominational connections from which to get a new man. Neither have they any method for their benevolent work or any mission boards to call out their spirit of giving and sacrificial service. At any rate, union churches usually die. Sometimes these union churches are named "community churches"; but their future is the same, regardless of their name, if they are connected with no outside organization.

The Federation of Churches

Federation, as it is called, is a second method of consolidating churches. Two or more churches unite for worship, hire one pastor, meet together for church school, but maintain their separate church organizations as before and send their benevolences to their respective boards. Sometimes their pastor comes from one denomination for a definite period; then, for exactly the same length of time, from the other denomination. Often they agree to get a pastor from a "neutral faith," with the idea that he shall be an impartial referee. There is often the feeling present that one group will take advantage of the others, and some of the less cooperative members appoint themselves to the task of being watchers or guardians over the interests of their denomination. This federation of churches has been tried in many places and is partially successful; but there is often a feeling of suspicion present. It offers a "gentleman's agreement" rather than a unified force. It is often, however, a move in the right direction.

Exchanging Churches

An exchange of churches, often called "swapping," is a third method of consolidating congregations. A weak Methodist Church and a stronger Presbyterian Church will find themselves occupying the same field. In another similar field will be a weak Presbyterian and a stronger Methodist Church. The two denominations "swap" their weak congregations, all the Methodists joining the Presbyterian Church in the first field, and in the second field all uniting in the Methodist Church. In this way the total membership of each denomination remains practically

the same. In the first community the Methodists give their money to Presbyterian missions and in all respects become Presbyterians. This method does not weaken the denominations nor diminish their benevolences. It doubles the salary of two pastors or at least gives them a resident pastorate. It removes sectarian jealousies in two communities and gives to both churches sufficient property to become adequately equipped both as to church and parsonage. Each of the two unified churches can put on a community-wide program without interference.

This method of exchanging churches has proved the most successful of any in readjusting overchurched communities. We are all thinking more of bringing the kingdom of God to our communities than of exalting our denomination and are finding this type of exchanging churches a practical way out.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did Jesus want his followers to work as a unified force?
2. What lessons regarding unification did we learn from our allies in the World War?
3. Why do we have so many denominations in America?
4. What do you think about the value of debates between churches?
5. If you moved into a new community and found the church there was of another denomination than your own, should you join it?
6. What is the effect of sectarian strife on a neighborhood?
7. Suggest ways of two or more churches in the same community becoming more friendly.
8. What do we mean by churches engaging in community service?
9. Suggest some improvements in this community which would be a united task for the churches.
10. What other rural institutions are consolidating?
11. Explain how denominations exchange churches.
12. Suggest an exchange that would improve two communities with which you are acquainted.

CHAPTER XII

OUR CHURCH

A Country Church

Along a beautiful roadside in the midst of a certain farming neighborhood stands a country church of which all the people in the community are proud. They are proud of its history, of its noble sons and daughters, who have built the foundations of Christian living within its sanctuary and have gone out from its doors to bless the world. To it have come the young for their good times, their monthly socials, their pageants and plays, their organized-class gatherings. In these happy surroundings life's most sacred relationships have been formed, and happy homes have started at its altar. Up its aisles have come the aged, the heavy-hearted, many groping for light and for pardon, others following with faltering steps and broken hearts their lost loved ones. All have been comforted, gladdened, lifted, helped. When they are once within its outer doors, the spirit of their Christ enters their hearts, and as they look up to his sanctuary they are lifted into his presence. This is *our* church—the church we love with all our hearts. This is the organization that is to Christianize all the human relationships of our community life.

Scripture Lesson

Luke 4. 16.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read.

John 2. 13-16.

13 And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 And he found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 15 and he made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables;

16 and to them that sold the doves he said, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.

Mark 2. 17.

And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

Matt. 11. 28-30.

28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

My Father's House

Over the outer doors of a country church in Maryland are the words "My Father's House." Within, upon the front wall, is the verse: "The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him." Nearby is another motto: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." To the people who worship here this is God's house. Jesus wanted his Father's house to be "a house of prayer for all the nations." Indignantly he drove out those who were not there to worship. Probably the most violent command he ever uttered was "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."

A Churchly Building

Sometimes when we pass a church we wonder whether it is a schoolhouse or a grange hall. On the other hand, many churches stand like faithful sentinels, pointing all who come that way toward heaven. For Christians to get the most inspiration from church attendance and for non-members to be drawn thither to learn of the joy and peace of the spiritual life we must build churchly buildings. Some churches give you the impression as soon as you see them that they are God's houses. They have what we call a "churchly exterior." The church spire, the bell calling the worshipers to prayer, the vine-clad walls, the shrubbery around the foundation tying down the church to the ground, the well-kept lawn, the Gothic windows, all tell you just one thing, and that is that people come here to worship. The interior too has a worshipful appearance.

The stained-glass windows shut out the outside world. The altar calls you back to God. The house is clean, well-ventilated, and comfortably heated.

In a backward, hilly Pennsylvania community, with no lighting conveniences, the little country church was the first building in which a Delco lighting system was installed. Before a half dozen years passed, fifty farm homes in that parish had put in such lights. But there are other communities where God's house seems to be the last one to be improved. Homes are painted, but the church has the appearance of a deserted house. Improved heating systems are put into the schoolhouse, the banks, and stores; but the old stove stays in the church. It was a great disappointment one evening, on riding out to a country church in Delaware with the pastor in his beautiful sedan automobile, to find smoky oil lamps in an unpainted building. The religious life of such a congregation must also be dim.

Sometimes a church building is neglected because there is no person or organization responsible for keeping it in shape. A Mississippi church built twenty years ago had never been painted, and apparently the windows had never been washed. "Not much of a house of prayer," you say; yet when the suggestion was made that a day be set aside for cleaning and improving the church, the people accepted it gladly and were happy in doing the work. A leader was all that was needed.

The Church Yard

The Galilæan farmers and fisher folk, who went up with Jesus and his family to Jerusalem to worship, were greatly inspired by the sight of the Temple. Jesus' disciples called attention to its beauty as they looked at it from the top of the Mount of Olives. When we build a church to-day we try to surround it with beauty and with the spirit of worship. Unattractive church buildings help to make the gospel uninviting. Look at this Nebraska village. The people of the village built their church, a one-roomed structure, on an unsightly hill because they could buy the lots cheap there; and the parsonage was built on a low, swampy place, because someone gave them the land. Perhaps the

owner had tried to sell these lots and had failed. It almost seems that they had made their "Father's house a house of merchandise."

A country-life institute was being held in a rural church in West Virginia recently. Questions were asked about the schools, the church, and the farms. Many of the members owned pure-bred hogs and cattle. They looked down on farmers who owned nothing but scrubs. They also discussed the growth of their church and found they had hardly as many members as ten years before. The church house had been built back in the sixties and had not been improved since. It showed no signs of paint. Several windows were broken. No shrubbery or vines softened the outlines of the building. The walks were aged. The adjoining cemetery was hid among weeds. It is hard to explain why good farmers will have pure-bred cattle and scrub churches. Contrasted with this West Virginia community are a hundred or a thousand others where the church yard, like the Temple in Jerusalem, is the most beautiful place in town and the place to which all are glad to come.

A Training Station

People who migrate to our country from a foreign land need to be trained in citizenship. We say we "Americanize" them. Likewise, those who are born here need to be taught how to become good citizens. This citizenship training is one of the great tasks of the schools. The churches also have the important task of training the youth of the land to become good citizens in the kingdom of our Lord, in which good will, love, and service rule. This desire to nurture the youth in Christ affects the church-school rooms and equipment as well as the workers selected. An Oklahoma congregation with a little one-room church was trying to care for a dozen Sunday-school classes in this one room. Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." It would be rather difficult for the children in this poorly equipped Sunday school to find their Lord or to learn much about him. The noise and confusion when a dozen classes were meeting in the same room would "forbid them" from find-

ing their Lord. But the members united with the "outsiders" in building a modern church, with a room for each department of the church school. They also built a church auditorium and a social hall equipped with a stereopticon. The members worked together on the new church and learned religious truths while shingling the roof as well as while sitting in the pews. So much community spirit was developed that the whole community went out one day and cleaned up the cemetery. The building of a new church building sometimes helps to revive the church membership as much as the coming of an evangelist does.

Give the Teachers a Chance

A church with adequate rooms for its church-school classes gives its teachers a better chance. In a small village in central Pennsylvania a church well equipped for church-school work always sent its pastors away with a reputation for skillful work in religious education. One became the representative of the Board of Sunday Schools (now the Board of Education) in his area. One of the young women in this church became so well equipped in all phases of religious education that she was selected by the Board of Home Missions to teach in summer schools for rural pastors throughout the country. No one knows how many other communities could furnish as many national leaders if their church only gave them a chance for development.

The Workers

If our church is to Christianize all the human relationships of our community life, we must help the workers to become efficient. The principal denominations have built up great schools and departments of religious education to prepare men and women to teach religion, to supervise the work of the church school, to become directors of religious education. Likewise, the boards of the church have established training schools for pastors to help them to use the most successful and modern methods of church work. There are many ways by which each community can help its pastor to become most successful. For one thing, we can provide a comfortable and convenient parsonage.

The Parsonage

In northern New York State is a minister who has gained a reputation for being a crank about fixing up the parsonage. Before he has been in a place very long, the people have installed in the parsonage all the labor-saving machinery they can buy—electric washer, vacuum cleaner, running water—in fact, it is made into a model house, modern in every way. They plant around it shade trees and fruit trees, berries and vines. A certain Virginia parsonage is so beautiful, its flowers and lawn so well kept, that commercial photographers have made picture post cards of it and keep them on sale as an advertisement of the town.

The Salaries

The teacher who trains in citizenship and the pastor who trains us in Christian living are our community's greatest assets. To them we owe our ideals, our progress, our faith, our hope for the future. To make these community leaders more efficient we must provide them with sufficient salaries. Not only is the attitude of a community toward God's house a test of its religious life, but also its attitude toward its pastor. On the Hudson River is a church of wealthy members who were seeking a minister. They stipulated the type of a man they must have—"a graduate of college and seminary," "a good preacher," "should have an automobile," "must be a good mixer"; yet the salary they proposed to pay him was about the same as these members paid their stenographers—about one tenth as much as they paid the managers of their businesses. It would look as if they thought their religion was only one tenth as important as the copper they dug from their mines or the sugar they sold in their stores.

Yet there are many other churches like the one in Kentucky which sends its pastor away each year to attend institutes and conventions "so that he will be up to date." They plan that he shall have enough salary to educate his children well.

At a rural-life institute in a small village the question of pastors' salaries was being discussed. Two churches were represented.

"What salaries do you pay your pastors?" they were asked.

"We pay ours fifteen hundred dollars a year," one person replied. Another said: "We pay ours eighteen hundred dollars. We usually pay the same amount in each church. We made a mistake this year when we raised our pastor's salary from fifteen to eighteen hundred dollars."

"What was the mistake? How did it happen?"

"We intended to pay the same as the other church. We heard that they had raised their amount, so we increased ours. Later we found the rumor about their salary was a mistake, but it was too late for us to go back to fifteen hundred dollars then."

"What do you pay your teachers in the high school?" was the next question.

"Two thousand dollars a year."

"Have they spent more time and money on their education than your pastors have?"

"No, not as much. Our high-school teachers are college graduates; our pastors spent three years in a seminary after they were graduated from college."

"Do your teachers work more months in the year than your pastors?"

"No, they work nine months, and our pastors eleven."

They excused the salaries they paid by saying that ministers are "called of the Lord" to preach. Fortunately this is true, but our same Lord is calling the laymen to provide proper financial support for the ministry. Our chief business is to Christianize all our human relationships. One way to do this is by making our pastors more efficient and by dignifying their calling through business-like financial methods. A bank would not increase the number of its depositors by advertising an ice-cream supper in the basement of the bank building to "help make up the cashier's back salary."

The Church Program

Most churches want to follow modern methods in all their work, but they are sometimes afraid to try new ways. A Texas church had raised its budget for twenty-five years in the same way—the old subscription paper. The man

who gave the most put his name at the top of the sheet. The woman who was the next best giver then wrote her name, and so on. This church was on a four-point circuit. This one church had paid about the same—two hundred and fifty dollars—for the last twenty-five years. But in the meantime land had increased from twenty to a hundred dollars an acre. New homes had been built. Telephones and automobiles had changed the life of the community. A local bank had been organized in which all the stock had been subscribed by local people in one afternoon. The teachers gave all of their time to this community, likewise the banker and the postmaster. But the minister gave only a fourth of his time here. The other people received their salary each month, but the church committee "went around" and "made up" the preacher's salary at the end of the year. To this church was proposed the budget system and the every-member canvass. They should plan their expenses ahead and put it all in one budget, they were told. They should ask each man and woman, boy and girl to make his pledge separately, and pay by the week. And then they should get a pastor to live in the community and give all of his time to the one place. Their pride in their church and their deep interest in Christianizing their community life were aroused, and they all agreed to the new plan—all except the old man who had put his name at the top of the subscription paper for so long. And after he saw the new plan working he too was converted.

A church in southwestern Iowa makes out its year's calendar of activities, prints them ahead of time, and follows them more accurately than its railroad follows its printed time table. Modern colleges have a printed catalogue, and churches are likewise printing their yearly programs.

An Ohio church made a map of its community on which was indicated the location of all homes. Colors were used to indicate the homes of church members, a color for each denomination in the community. Homes of non-church members were left uncolored. This map was hung up in the young people's room. It visualized their task of getting new members. As the people joined that church,

the colors on the map were filled in. Many churches use similar methods for locating their field for evangelistic efforts.

Wherever a church is putting on a successful program, people sooner or later are attracted to it. They prefer a movement to a monument. They like to be affiliated with a going concern.

A stranger in a village in northwestern Pennsylvania asked a young man what there was to go to around there. "We go to the movies in a town ten miles down the pike," he said, "and we often go to a church eight miles over the hill."

"Why go so far to church when you have three churches here in the village?"

"The one over there has something going on most of the time."

Let us make our church such that the people who come within its walls will meet our Lord. It is God's house and deserves our best thought and care, our deepest love and affection. It is the one institution in our community which has for its objective the putting of the spirit of the Christ into our home life and into our business and neighborhood activities.

Questions for Discussion

1. A church in northeastern Ohio cost one thousand dollars, while one tombstone in the adjoining cemetery cost eighteen hundred dollars, and another twenty-four hundred dollars. The caretaker of the cemetery received the same salary as this church paid its pastor. What can you say about this church's ideals?

2. A New Jersey town has a more beautiful public library building than a church. Does it think of its church as God's house? What is wrong?

3. Whose fault is it when a minister can't pay his grocery bill?

4. Why do ministers stay such a short time at some churches?

5. A Montana pastor was trying to get a system of running water installed in the parsonage. One member of the

official board objected, saying he did not have running water in his house. What should the pastor have done?

6. A bank that advertised an ice-cream supper in the basement to help pay the cashier's salary probably would go bankrupt. How does it affect the attitude of a community toward a church when it runs its finances in such an unbusinesslike manner?

7. God grades the pupils of the church school: Why do we not give them graded lessons?

8. What are the reasons for a country church having a pastor live in the community and give all of his time to the one parish?

CHAPTER XIII

WORLD NEIGHBORS

When stagecoaches traveling between New York City and Philadelphia stopped for the night at a certain little New Jersey town, the villagers gathered around the drivers in the big barn to discuss the happenings in the outside world. Until late at night they sat by the log fire in the inn, listening to the travelers' tales. Long since, railways and State roads have stopped the daily journeys of the old stagecoach. Telephones, daily papers, and radios bring the news to the little Jersey town more quickly than the travelers at the ancient inn. The old barn to which the villagers came to get the world news has recently been bought by the local Methodist Church and fitted up for a community hall. A large lot near the barn now owned by the church is used as a parking place for the automobiles of people who come here to attend community meetings. This rural center is now a place that has happenings of its own to tell. Its events, its ideals, its standard of living, the food from its farms, the teachers and ministers it sends out—its entire life affects the big world that once seemed so strange and so far away. This is one of many rural communities, once provincial and backward, which now, because of changed conditions, are influencing daily and even hourly the complex world around them.

If our rural communities are centers of righteousness, we will become a righteous nation. Jesus said that good trees must bring forth good fruit. Although American cities have grown rapidly, the foundation of our nation's moral and religious life still rests upon the farm home. It is important that this foundation shall be built upon a rock. A small country church faithfully teaching religion to its youth may have much to discourage it, but it is making possible a more righteous city and a more righteous nation. Rural religion is the leaven for the religious life of our State and nation.

Scripture Lesson

Luke 13. 18-21; 6. 43-49.

18 He said therefore, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I liken it? 19 It is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his own garden; and it grew, and became a tree; and the birds of the heaven lodged in the branches thereof.

20 And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? 21 It is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.

43 For there is no good tree that bringeth forth corrupt fruit; nor again a corrupt tree that bringeth forth good fruit. 44 For each tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. 45 The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? 47 Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it: because it had been well builded. 49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great.

World Contacts and World Neighbors

We need not go back in memory so many years to recall those visits to the county seat which came only once a year. Many farm women then spent an entire day at the county fair, seeing scarcely anyone they knew. Finally, the mail routes penetrated rural America, and daily papers were seen in nearly every home. Farmers who meet at the end of the corn row now talk about a new European premier as readily as they once discussed family aches and pains. The rural free delivery and the consolidated school helped the good-roads movement. Then came the automobiles, which broke down the old neighborhood boundaries and made the county one big neighborhood.

Six typical counties in New York State were selected, and for two days during the month of August the traffic

was studied on certain roads. For the years 1909, 1914, 1916, 1919, 1920, and 1922 the motor vehicles passing the same six points increased as follows: 459, 1,904, 4,039, 8,073, 10,522, 10,854—an increase in thirteen years of 2,400 per cent. Only 16 per cent of the number of horses traveled over these roads in 1922 as in 1909. In 1909 there were 126,593 automobiles manufactured in the United States; in 1919, ten years later, there were 1,683,916 manufactured—an increase of 1,400 per cent. With population increasing at about 1 per cent a year the number of licensed automobiles in New York State has increased over the previous year at the average rate of 23 per cent a year since 1915.

These facts are familiar to all, but we still want it proved to us that the small neighborhood boundary has given place to the larger area. Let us take the farm bureau as one county movement that has broken down small neighborhood lines. On March 20, 1911, John H. Barron, a Cornell graduate, became the first farm-bureau agent in the United States. Farmers' cooperative demonstration work had been begun in the South as early as 1903; but Broome County, New York, had the first county-farm-bureau representative in 1911. By 1918 there were more than three thousand county agents. The number fell off slightly at the close of the war, but is now on the increase; and to-day 2,436 counties are organized, so far as agricultural education is concerned, on the county basis—that is, with county agricultural agents. The same thing is true of the home bureaus. Farm women have their community units, but the county basis is observed as far as organization is concerned. This means that farm women not only are acquainted with women throughout the county but work with them throughout the year on such questions as nutrition, clothing, health, child welfare, and recreation. They meet regularly at the county seat for classes and discussion. A million farmers and their families are thinking of their work-day problems on a county-wide basis.

The president of the United States Chamber of Commerce expresses surprise and regret that there should be an agricultural bloc, although his own organization has been functioning in that capacity for the cities for years.

Thus, we see on every side the growing importance and influence of agriculture.

A California farmer was the originator of the plan for an International Institute of Agriculture. While this chapter is being written, this international organization is holding its seventh biennial session in Rome. Represented at this conference are sixty-two governments, comprising ninety-six per cent of the world's area and ninety-seven per cent of its population. The United States secretary of agriculture points out that it is possible for the farmers in Iowa, Minnesota, or Idaho to receive before night the crop report transmitted from Argentina in the morning to this institute and thence distributed. This meeting in Italy calls our attention to the fact that all the farmers of the earth and the millions of people who depend on them for food are interdependent. We are now in reality world neighbors. Let us see how our religion must guide us in our new world-wide relationships.

The Farmer's Service

The first principle of the followers of our Lord is to serve one's fellow men. The farmer serves his world neighbors by raising food, just as the minister or teacher serves by conducting an orphanage in a foreign-mission land. One third of all our exports are food products. The man who raises the wheat for the Armenian refugees is rendering his service to the world the same as the missionary who distributes the loaf of bread. If raising the world's food is a Christian service, wasting it is immoral. A lazy farmer is not a good Christian. If I let the weeds take my crops I am violating the Christian principle of service. For example, the United States Bureau of Plant Industry tells us that the black-stem rust in the years 1919 to 1921 caused losses in our seven principal wheat-growing States of more than two hundred million dollars—an amount larger than the total expenditure for foreign missions of all denominations for those three years. Waste of this kind is immoral when children are starving.

In the course of an address to the delegates of the Manitoba Agricultural Society, President Bracken, of the

Manitoba Agricultural College, made the following significant observations:

"Weeds caused us twice as much loss last year as we pay to maintain the provincial government; stem rusts of wheat take a greater toll in some years than the highest tariff ever put on by a protectionist government; the losses caused by insects each year, if prevented, would more than offset the loss from increased freight; the waste in harvesting, threshing, handling, and transporting screenings, if prevented, would save enough to more than pay the cost of running the agricultural college."

The year book of the United States Department of Agriculture says:

"The farmer is needlessly reducing his crop yield by growing harmful weeds, the yield being reduced 10 per cent in corn, 9 per cent in tame hay, 8 per cent in potatoes, 13 per cent in spring wheat, 7 per cent in winter wheat, and 27 per cent in pasture. The preventable leak from this one source runs well over a billion dollars a year."

Since the farmer serves his fellow men by providing food for the world, waste is therefore immoral. In discussing a certain export bill a well-known agricultural paper has this drastic statement:

"If the export bill fails to pass, there is but one effective answer—cut wheat, hog, and corn production so that there is no surplus to export. This is a brutal thing; it means the death of millions of Europeans as a result of disease following on undernourishment. But there is no alternative."

This un-Christian exhortation must be answered in a different spirit. No Christian farmer can live up to New Testament ideals and carry out this editor's advice to limit production to the point of starving "millions of Europeans." Not by limiting production but by improving world marketing facilities will we solve our international economic difficulties. It is important that we keep before us this spirit of service as we try to solve our international agricultural problems.

Unselfish Cooperation

Two attitudes toward cooperative marketing are held in

agricultural groups to-day—a selfish attitude and an unselfish one. The first is a class-conscious hatred toward middlemen, spurred on by hard times and guided by professional organizers. Farmers are told by these high-salaried promoters to limit production, to get a monopoly on the market, to charge a higher price and give less service. The other attitude—the unselfish one—is that cooperation is a method of rendering a service. This group teaches that we can put our farm produce on the market more efficiently by working together. This type of cooperation developed at first around local shipping points. Ten to fifty persons with common problems found by working together they could solve their marketing difficulty. If there was no satisfactory local market for their livestock they pooled their interests and shipped in carload lots to a distant market. If freight rates did not allow them to ship fluid milk, they built a cooperative creamery or a butter factory. Cooperation is thus put upon a service basis. When these ten to fifty cooperators found another group with the same ideals they naturally joined hands with them, and the federated type of cooperative organization grew up. There are now nine thousand active cooperative organizations among American farmers. Last year they did nearly two billion dollars' worth of business. The service these cooperative organizations render is the standardization and grading of produce, storing and putting it on the market in a steady stream, rather than glutting the market and arranging less expensive cooperative credit. Every fruit farmer who raises Sunkist oranges or Sun-Maid raisins has many things in common with other farmers raising the same product. He follows the same standard of handling and grading. He shares with him transportation and shipping expenses. Farmers who live a hundred miles apart, who have never seen one another, are thus loyal and true to each other. They assume common obligations at the bank and in truth are business neighbors. Thus we see how the community boundaries are extending through commodity marketing organizations. The term "world neighbors" is becoming a reality. During these days of economic stress and strain our rural religion is needed to keep us true to our coop-

erative obligations, to keep the service ideal uppermost in our marketing, and to prevent hatred and revenge from creeping into our large cooperative associations.

Farm Cooperation Requires Honesty

If two men own and operate a threshing machine together they must be honest in order to get along with each other. The Dairymen's League Cooperative Association owns 151 plants valued at six million dollars. The sixty-five thousand farmers in this organization must be just as honest with each other if this partnership is to be effective. Christian ideals are needed to-day more than ever. It is easy to be honest when we have daily contacts with our cooperators, but it is even more necessary to have strict honesty and loyalty when we seldom see those with whom we are cooperating. A dairy farmer may think his unsanitary milk won't make any difference, the fruit farmer may slip in some small-sized apples, the wheat raiser may fill in with wet wheat; yet it is strict honesty in making standards and grades which makes for our produce a reliable market. We thus see that Christian principles are necessary for solving most of our economic problems. It takes an honest Christian to maintain a brand of farm products. The New Testament standards are necessary to make large agricultural cooperatives a success. The religion of the pioneer might be a Sunday affair, but the modern farmer must have the principles of Jesus in all his daily business contacts. As life becomes more complex, more depends on the sincerity and honesty of the members of the group.

American Agriculture Raises the Standard of Living Abroad

One of the principal tasks of foreign missionaries is to raise the standard of living throughout the world. They establish industrial schools as well as distribute Gospels. They teach sanitation as well as visit the sick. They heal as well as evangelize. Agricultural missions are the newest venture of our benevolent boards. They carry not only the gospel but our standard of living. Students from abroad are coming to this country in great numbers to study in

our schools and take back our standards. This all means that the standard of living in our American farm homes affects the life in foreign lands. In Russia, India, and China four persons out of five live on the land and make their living directly from farming. Three fourths of the world's population are engaged in agricultural occupations. President Butterfield of the Massachusetts College of Agriculture estimates that there are not less than one billion rural folk in the world. This vast agricultural population is being influenced by our American farm home.

The fact that our girls are studying home economics by the thousands in our State colleges of agriculture, many of them going out to teach "better home life," is sure to affect the position that women and children hold in non-Christian lands. Many diseases are rural, such as malaria, yellow fever, typhus, and hookworm. As we learn to fight these toll takers of human life in rural America we shall rapidly pass on the information to less-favored lands. Likewise, so long as we spend two hundred million dollars a year on patent medicines we need not be surprised at quacks and "cures" in non-Christian countries. Neither should we be amazed at the lack of schools abroad when our own need so much improvement, and while our women spend as much money on cosmetics each year as the total expenditure for our public schools. Twice as much money is spent in America for tobacco as is spent for education. Yet these useless articles are being exported along with our Bibles and our missionaries. Our standard of living, good or bad, affects the life of all our world neighbors. As we work for improvement in our own communities let us remember the mustard seed in the parable which "groweth up and becometh greater than all the herbs." Thus the kingdom of God spreads.

Prohibition was first sponsored by our rural people. During those early days of its unpopularity the farmer vote could be depended on. It was always "dry." Now the movement for national prohibition has spread to a dozen foreign countries, and we have hopes of a "dry" world. The little leaven is doing its work. Our opposition to child labor has had its effect likewise in other countries. Japan, Czecho-Slovakia, Esthonia, and Sweden have

recently enacted preventive legislation. If our American farm life is righteous, if our American farm homes are built on the solid rock of religious living, they will stand like the house in the parable. The influence of the leaven of Christianity must reach all of life and every life.

World Brotherhood

"World brotherhood" is one of the phrases that help us to understand better the coming of the kingdom of God. But this world brotherhood, in which we have one Father and in which we treat every other man as a brother, is not a theological phrase to be debated; it is something to be lived daily. World brotherhood is a sum total of community attitudes. Read the following letter from a resident of Bangalore, India, and see how our attitude toward our world neighbors determines this whole question of the brotherhood of nations:

"Editor, the *Christian Century:* Sir: A few months back I went to America. I traveled only in the Eastern and the Northern States and in parts of the Middle West, making a railway journey of over three thousand miles. I may therefore claim to have got some idea of the American ideal of fellowship and brotherhood and just dealing between man and man, as actually practiced in your country. Americans have a natural hatred for the Negroes, and it may be stated as a common fact that the average Americans at first sight take the Indians to be Negroes, and they are treated in the same way. An Indian must call himself a Hindu, be he a Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian, Buddhist, or of any other religious denomination. In many places, although I traveled with a turban on just to indicate that I was an Indian Hindu (and to my regret I could not put a poster on my forehead or on my back to indicate my nationality), I was no better than a hated Negro in the eyes of Americans, whose fellow citizens are now trying to teach us in our country brotherliness and just dealing between man and man. In Washington, the capital of the federal government and within a few hundred yards of the Capitol—the meeting place of the two houses of Congress of the most democratic republic in the world—I was refused food in public restaurants owned by white people. In other towns even in the North the same fate awaited me. I tried in not less than a dozen barber shops in the towns of Detroit, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls to get my hair cropped; but not a single white barber would touch the hair of my head. Away from some big cities, such as New York, Chicago, Boston, etc., people would not sit near me, either in railways

or in street cars, if they could help it. It was difficult to get accommodation in hotels. I am sorry to say that even some of the Young Men's Christian Associations did not hesitate to show their color prejudices by refusing accommodation. When I expressed my intention of visiting Birmingham, in the South, I was told by the American Express Company of New York that I could not get a sleeping-car compartment in the train, as the well-known Pullman Company would not sell tickets for a sleeper to a colored man in the Southern States! nor could the Express Company get for me any hotel accommodation in that part for the same reason. Of course, those who are stationed in one place may get known and may not have such bitter experience. But a country is generally judged by the treatment meted out to strangers, for real politeness and courtesy are always appreciated and recognized when they are extended to strangers. I must admit, wherever I went with letters of introduction I was very well treated, but this may be said to be confined only to those who happened to come to know me and to know something about India and Hindus. The treatment I received in the various countries in Europe, when traveling there, is just the reverse. The contrast is so clear and noticeable. I do not want to go into the details of my good experience about the industrial, commercial, educational, and various other activities in America, for which I have great admiration. America is going ahead of many other countries in these respects. But I would only tell our American missionaries in India when they want to preach to us about brotherliness, just dealing between man and man, and so on, 'Halt; physician, heal thyself!' We want the almighty dollars of America—and she has plenty of them—for use in India for education, sanitation, and other philanthropic and humanitarian works which are urgently needed in this country; and we may very well do with missionaries for this class of work and we shall be thankful and grateful to them for their services. But when they want to teach us about dealing between man and man, it would be far better for these missionaries of religion to return to their own land and turn their attention toward their own country people—men and women—and educate them about this idealism and brotherliness and as to how to treat the colored people in their own country, so that real Christian fellowship and brotherliness might be fostered and practiced there.

"Bangalore, India.

A. M. Sen."

We can have a League of Nations when we have a friendly attitude toward our next-door neighbor. We can have a world court to settle disputes openly and peaceably when we substitute orderly legal proceedings at home for lynching parties and other types of invisible government.

We cannot cleanse our national politics as long as we let the sinners go to the polls in our home township, and the righteous simply hold an indignation meeting after the election. We must teach religion in our homes and practice it in our everyday life, in business, in voting, in our cooperatives, and in our church. Like the leaven in the meal Christian ideals and standards will eventually but surely reach the farthest home in a foreign land and influence the most remote recesses of a needy world.

Questions for Discussion

1. What new things to put them in touch with the outside world do most communities have which they didn't have fifty years ago?
2. How have these improvements enlarged our communities and increased our "neighbors"?
3. What county organizations do farm people now have for both men and women which we did not have fifteen years ago?
4. What is the International Institute of Agriculture?
5. Discuss the ways in which the farmer renders service to the world.
6. What do you think about the advice to limit output even though it means "the death of millions"?
7. Why do we need religious principles in our present farm cooperative movement?
8. Can a Christian farmer encourage a spirit of hatred toward middlemen?
9. How do American farm homes influence home life in non-Christian lands?
10. How would you answer the letter of the man from India?
11. What do you mean by everyday religion?

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